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INGEMAR LINDÉN

1844

AND THE SHUT DOOR  
PROBLEM

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*To Ellinor—my understanding consort*

# Contents

**Foreword 9**

**Introduction 11**

**I. OCTOBER 22, 1844, AND THE SHUT DOOR PROBLEM 13**

1. The Background 13
2. Open and Shut Door—Great Divide in Millerism 16
3. The Shut-Door Theology 19
4. Shut Door and the Sabbatarian Pioneers 24

**II. ELLEN GOULD WHITE (1827—1915) AND THE SHUT DOOR 37**

1. Some General Observations About EGW and Some Research Problems 37
2. Edson's Version Reveals the Earliest EGW Manipulations? 39
3. The Visions Support Shut Door 49
4. 1851 and The End of the Shut Door Period 61

**III. FROM SHUT DOOR TO INVESTIGATIVE JUDGEMENT 75**

1. Attempts at a New Theology 75
2. Crosier's Popular Reinterpretation of Daniel 8:14 76

**IV. THE SHUT DOOR DEBATE: 1852—1885 79**

1. Attacks by Competing Sabbatarian Adventists Prior to 1874 79
2. The Isaac Wellcome—Miles Grant—A.C. Long Charges 1874—1885 84
3. SDA Rebuttals 1883—1885 87

**V. SHUT DOOR FROM CANRIGHT TO POEHLER 95**

1. From D.M. Canright to W.A. Spicer 95
2. Nichol-Adventism's Foremost "Defensor Fidei" 97

3. LeRoy Edwin Froom—Arthur L. White 102
4. Damsteegt—Poehler 107

## **VI. BIBLIOGRAPHY 127**

## **VII. INDEX OF NAMES 129**

# Foreword

Sabbatarian Adventism currently experiences its most significant development in its modern history. After October 26, 1979, when Dr. Desmond Ford, famed visiting professor of Avondale College, Australia, delivered his provocative lecture on 1844 and the so called sanctuary doctrine at Pacific Union College, Calif., Adventism, i.e. the Seventh-day Adventist Church, will never remain the same. Discussions on a world wide range are now taking place. Some of the historic pioneer concepts as to what happened on that October day in 1844, when William Miller's and Samuel S. Snow's time calculation for the time of the Parousia proved false, are now being questioned. In order to get a real understanding of these problems, the very foundations of Adventism, this comprehensive study may be of some importance.

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Rimbo, December 17th, 1981

Ingemar Lindén



# Introduction

## The Importance of This Study

Readers not familiar with the unique and fascinating history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church may most likely wonder why there is a need for a factual, scholarly presentation of the so called shut-door problem. To students of Adventist history, however, Shut Door has always been an intriguing study, let alone that its full story has not yet been documented in print. Especially in recent years more and more informed scholars have come to understand how important this discussion is. 1844 and its turbulent aftermath is really a kind of indispensable key that unlocks the secrets of classical Adventism as it was understood by its pioneers, such as James and Ellen White, O.R.L. Crosier, Hiram Edson and Joseph Bates. They all advocated a theology that centered around the understanding that on October 22, 1844, something important happened in the unfolding of God's dealings with mankind.

The crux in the whole problem is Ellen Gould White's (EGW) involvement. For because of a mostly very tendentious treatment by both apologists and polemicists, the real significance of Shut Door has never been understood by most readers. This is true even of ministers and some theologians in the SDA Church.

As we shall find below<sup>1</sup> this question has caught the interest of many writers over a long span of time, all since the 1850s. But owing to several factors no satisfactory study has yet been devoted to a full or definitive presentation to this problem. Today, however, with all needed material available to the scholars, Shut Door should no longer remain an enigmatic problem.

A young German Adventist Seminary student, Rolf Poehler, has very recently expressed the growing interest within the SDA Church and elsewhere at last to arrive at a correct understanding of this old or perennial problem by pointing to its enormous importance to a real understanding of Adventism itself. Among other things he reminds us of the fact, that Shut Door is "closely related to the question of the validity of the historical and theological foundations of the SDA church."<sup>2</sup> He goes on to say

that it has to do with a) the question of the validity of the Millerite (and especially the Seventh Month) movement: b) the issue of the validity of the October 22 time calculations: c) the issue of the validity of the SDA sanctuary doctrine and "the third angel's message" ("the foundations of our faith" Ev. 222; 4 SP 258; 1 SG 165 ff).<sup>3</sup> Very truly this young scholar observes that "the shut-door problem touches the *raison d'être* of the SDA church", and he adds that this issue "is directly linked to . . . the validity of EGW's prophetic claim."<sup>4</sup> If these assertions are true, we certainly have a good reason for undertaking this study.

### *Notes*

1. Cf. below, pp. 79—127.

2. Rolf J. Poehler, ". . . *And the Door Was Shut*"

Seventh-day Adventists and the Shut-Door Doctrine in the Decade After the Great Disappointment. A Paper presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the course THST 690, Problems in Theology, and CHIS 874, Developments of SDA Doctrines. Feb. 1978. Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Mich. p. 7.

3. Ibid, pp. 7—8.

4. Ibid., p. 8.

# I. October 22, 1844, and the Shut Door Problem

## 1. The Background

Millerism is without question the most spectacular apocalyptic revival since the days of the Fifth Monarchy Men in England during the Civil War. At its peak the unorganized movement directly or indirectly influenced the lives of probably one hundred thousand people in New England, and the whole nation knew of William Miller's apocalyptic calculations. For by the means of mass meetings in the giant tent, seating up to 6000 listeners, or the many camp-meetings, gathering from 2000 to 20,000 participants few people could avoid not hearing about the convinced Baptist-farmer from Low Hampton, New York. And he was not by any means alone to spread abroad the alarming news of the speedy end of the world, some time "in 1843." For Miller was soon surrounded with "helpers," ministers and laymen, from most evangelical churches. And the output of sundry kinds of literature almost flooded the land. It is therefore obvious that there must have been special stimuli in the Ante-Bellum America which responded to apocalyptic preaching of this kind. Most Christians in the "Bible fearing" groups, where a literal interpretation of the Holy Writ was law, did believe in heaven and hell as concrete realities and also expected a literal Second Coming and the millennium, the Golden Age, to wait around the corner.<sup>1</sup>

Miller himself for many years refrained from settling on a definite date as the last day in history; he merely stated that "in or about 1843" the Parousia would happen. When that critical year ended, however, he had to find some explanation for the delay. By stretching the limit to spring 1844, he hoped to solve that riddle as to time. But when nothing happened in that respect he despaired about his whole "prophetic interpretation." Hence Millerism abated markedly in the summer of 1844. The whole movement might very well have reached its inglorious end in the autumn of 1844, but for a novel interpretation.

In August 1844, at the Exeter camp-meeting, two former ministers of the Congregational persuasion, Samuel S. Snow (1806—1870), and possibly George Storrs (1796—1879), introduced a new system for tackling

Daniel's troublesome "year-day" prophecy of the 2300 "evenings-mornings" (Dan. 8:14). By adjusting the commencement of the so called 2300 years, to begin not in spring as Miller had suggested, but in the autumn of 457 B.C., in the "seventh month of the Jewish year," Snow and Storrs maintained that the "cleansing of the sanctuary" would occur exactly on the "tenth day of the seventh month," corresponding to October 22, 1844.<sup>2</sup> The movement was saved, at least for a time, and the wheels began once more to gather speed. Millerism was headed against its dramatic climax: Christ would come at last on October 22. The hard-core Millerites invested their whole existence on that calculation. Many sold or gave away their property or money in full accord with their religious convictions. Reluctantly Miller, too, gave up his doubts as to the October date, as he witnessed the fervor and magnetic strength in the so called Seventh Month movement.<sup>3</sup>

With men such as Snow and Storrs in the lead, the movement changed character and the more orthodox preaching about the imminent Parousia had to give room for the heterodox idea that the fate of mankind depended on acceptance or rejection of a fixed date for the event. Most likely Miller himself had never thought of this as a thing heterodox and ultraistic in the early years of his preaching. Regardless of what he had wanted, however, this was, of course, the real consequence of his time calculations. We also know that Miller came to believe in a kind of "shut door" for the world some time *before* October 22. As God has closed the door of Noah's ark prior to the Flood, so it would happen that God himself was going to shut "the door of mercy" as some Millerites phrased it, on October 22. Referring to the parable of the ten virgins, the Millerites interpreted their own history in the light of that parable. The Bridegroom would soon come to the marriage and take the Bride, the "honest souls," who looked to October 22 as the date for the Parousia to heaven. In other words Snow's October date became nothing less than a *conditio sine qua non* for salvation. In the autumn of 1844 those Millerites began to press this October date on the churches.<sup>4</sup>

On the morning of October 23 Snow's and Storr's time calculations turned into what historians know as the Great Disappointment. So far as one could see, nothing happened to verify the claims of the Millerites; one thing was certain, Christ had not come back to earth in person in any visible sense. It comes as no surprise then that the adherents had experienced a real ship wreck or a violent shaking in their most cherished hopes. One of the participants, Ellen Gould Harmon, writes of her disappointment many years later and compares her situation with that of the discip-

les after the crucifixion of Christ.<sup>5</sup>

And once the spell of Miller's preaching was over, the reaction from the side of the critics knew no restrictions. The weaker sort of Millerites lost all interest in the movement, and the city authorities, as well as the established churches, got loose on the "deluded fanatics." In cases where the adherents had parted with all their earthly possessions, it was, of course, easy to apply strict measures against the "extremists." In this connection it will no doubt be sufficient to refer to a few instances of such harsh treatment of the Millerites. A former Methodist clergyman, Apollos Hale, who joined Miller's movement wrote that "during the excitement of '44, and the early part of '45, some of the brethren were put under guardianship, and others into custody in a private house belonging to one of their most active enemies."<sup>6</sup>

In August 1845 James White, the future renowned Sabbatarian leader, gave a realistic description of the trials the Millerites experienced in Maine. Lauding Enoch Jacobs' shut-door paper, he exclaimed: "The Day Star shines gloriously. We, down East,<sup>7</sup> are happy to catch a single ray from its brilliant light. Shine, ye little messenger, till the glorious King of Zion bursts forth on the sons of the morning."<sup>8</sup>

James White went on to say that he would like to double the size of the Day-Star, if possible. This desire could not be fulfilled, however, after what had happened to the jubilant Millerites in Maine, where "most of the brethren are under guardianship."<sup>9</sup> Worse than that perhaps, the Millerites had been subject of punitive measures. "We have passed through keen suffering in Maine, as a people," remarked White. "We have been brought before magistrates—publicly whipped—put in the jail-work-house, and families torn asunder—all to prevent us from following the Lamb: but to no effect."<sup>10</sup>

There is no ground to question such straightforward reports. From other sources we know how roughly the public would treat Millerites after their bitter disappointment. Their meetings were attacked by mobs, and of all leaders none was endangered so much as Joshua V. Himes (1805—1895). We read in *The Advent Herald* about the "rabble" shouting in chorus: "Bring out old Himes! . . . Him! Bring him out! We'll fix him!"<sup>11</sup>

The situation was most precarious in the East. In addition to the hostility from the side of rough people, there followed endless divisions and fanaticism among the once united adventist brethren. The disappointment ended in confusion as to the meaning of the October time movement. For a time there was no coherence at all. During this state of bewilderment or uncertainty arose what would be the future family of Adventist sects

and denominations. Participants claim that the situation was especially bad in Maine, in Portland, Litchfield and Orrington, where all sorts of "fanciful ideas" had developed. The root of all those evils according to some observers was "the shut door doctrine."<sup>12</sup> Another correspondent to *The Advent Herald* writes about the state in Maine: "In Portland, Litchfield, Gardiner and China, . . . they have passed through some most severe trials: wave after wave of fanaticism has rolled over them."<sup>13</sup>

Each one of those groups, or "bands" as they called themselves, were striving for the cherished position to be styled as *the* remnant, the only ones entitled to the rights to be sealed by the Lord at his speedy "return from the marriage." The opposing groups were mutually excommunicating one another on Miller's "left wing." In order to qualify for membership or fellowship in those fringe groups all kinds of "tests" were put up. Before the introduction of the Seventh-day Sabbath, feet-washing and the so called salutation kiss were such tests to which the adherents must testify. In addition to those practices, there were a considerable lot of ultraistic practices, the most obnoxious was no doubt the position to give up all secular work or engage in so called "spiritual wifery" affairs, where it was claimed that the believers had already entered into the millennium and so did not have to follow the regulations mandatory for this sinful world.<sup>14</sup> But feet-washing and the "kiss" could also be considered an offence, in promiscuous companies.<sup>15</sup> Most of these aberrations were shortlived and soon burnt themselves up in the fires of fanaticism. Regardless of that, the more sensitive Millerites were pained by the many confusing ideas. A brother from New York voiced his concern thus: "O what diversity of views there are among us here! It would seem that there is a peculiar sectarian bigotry full of bitterness, separating very friends. Brother Snow and those believing with him refuse all sociability towards others, standing aloof and alone. I believe, having no desire for the good of any but themselves . . . How are we scattered one from another, so that hardly two may be found together."<sup>16</sup>

## 2. Open and Shut Door—The Great Divide in Millerism

Confusion and division followed in the wake of the October events. Never again would Millerism be capable of uniting the opposing forces. The main problem after the Disappointment related to the *raison d'être* of Miller's whole movement. After all was Millerism only a sad human mistake? Was it in spite of all defensive arguments simply a fact that

Miller had distorted the apocalyptic texts and read into them what God never intended? For in retrospect even many Millerites seemed to realize that enthusiasm and unwillingness to admit mistakes do not make honest errors gospel truths. We shall delineate the two main schools of thought developing among Millerites after the October time failure and follow the results of those opposing forces.

As has been implied above<sup>17</sup> not everybody in Miller's movement accepted Snows' novel apocalyptic time calculations. Miller himself hesitated for weeks on end and other leaders like Himes never bought the October date. It so happened that Himes and his associates could make public declarations to the effect that the whole time element in the Seventh Month movement was a mistake. Those views, later known as the open-door position, had its foremost spokesman in *The Advent Herald* with Himes as editor. After some months Miller joined his efforts with these so called moderate adventists.<sup>18</sup> Dominant leaders in this *majority* camp were besides Miller and Himes Dr. N.N. Whiting, Elon Galusha, Josiah Litch and Lorenzo Fleming.<sup>19</sup> According to the Open Door brethren nothing at all had happened on October 22, nothing to be worth mentioning in any salvation-historical sense. But several thousands of Millerites experienced a severe disappointment due to purely human mistakes. This reasoning gathered momentum in early spring of 1845 and motivated the important conference at Albany, New York, April 29—30, May 1.

There were *three* main causes for that conference. Firstly, to redefine the doctrinal position; secondly to find out how the Millerites were faring after the October ship wreck; and thirdly how to deal with the extremists, as they regarded them, or with those who had been won over to the shut-door brethren.<sup>20</sup> Most states in New England came to the conference, but not Maine, which was significant for the ultraistic and confused state in that province. None of the future Sabbatarian leaders bothered to come to Albany.

Regardless of the attitudes of shut-door believers, the Albany Conference nevertheless stands out as the most significant Millerite convention after the Disappointment. Albany is important for several reasons. An Adventist scholar on the Sunday-keeping side, Dr. David Arthur, makes the following observations as to this gathering:

1. The moderate element in Adventism was strengthened;
2. Some of the leaders who had wavered in their beliefs and felt like joining the radicals rejected those ultraistic speculations and returned to the "original Advent faith."<sup>21</sup>

3. Albany gave the lead to the best men or to the scholars and trained preachers;
4. The conference sharpened the divisions among Adventists and made them permanent."<sup>22</sup>

The Albany Conference was the forum for "open-door Adventists," or those who went back to orthodoxy in reference to Gospel preaching. The scholars or trained theologians—the few that remained after the humiliating October events—were found only among the open-door brethren. It is also a fact that Albany made the divisions between the open-door and shut-door brethren permanent.

Here lies in retrospect the most important effect of the famous conference, for prior to Albany many other topics had competed for excellency; but after Albany the question of the interpretation of October 22 in the terms of rejection or acceptance of its salvation-historical importance became the main issue of dispute. For besides Dr. Arthur's four major points this writer would like to add some additional resolutions from the same conference. The Albany Conference repudiated the sundry novel "tests" that fringe groups on Miller's "left-wing" had advocated, such as feet-washing and the so called salutation kiss. Most likely they also frowned upon the incipient Sabbatarian tendencies.<sup>23</sup> And a direct warning was formulated against the many "charismatic" witnesses on the isolated left-wing flank. We quote the minutes: "That we have no confidence in any new messages, visions, dreams, tongues, miracles, extraordinary revelations, impressions, discerning of spirits, or teachings not in accord with the unadulterated word of God."<sup>24</sup>

In such lucid terms the men behind the Albany Conference cut the head of the many "Schwarmgeister" or spiritualizers afloat after the general confusion in Miller's movement. This specific warning also prevented the future Sabbatarian witness, prophetess Ellen Gould Harmon-White, from exerting any real influence on Miller's majority camp.

Once we have visualized the historical situation within Miller's movement after 1844, it is much easier to discern how the many divisive groups can be divided not into three groups: 1) open-door believers, 2) shut-door spiritualizers, and 3) shut-door moderates, as Adventist writers of the defensive persuasion have wanted us to view the case, but merely into *two* groups: open-door adventists and shut-door believers. It is only gratifying to notice how the view which this writer has followed since 1971, recently has been accepted also by writers of the semi-official aura.<sup>25</sup>

### 3. The Shut-Door Ideology

As a reaction to the "liberal" open-door position expressed at the Albany Conference, small radical "bands" on Miller's left formulated their counter-theology. Among those radical brethren there was hardly any theological expertise, but many self-conscious laymen and visionaries. The exception to this general observation was the two former ministers, Apollos Hale and Joseph Turner. Despite all minor differences all the future shut-door believers agreed on all the basic ideas as to the shut-door theology: something of overwhelming importance in God's plan for the world happened on that mysterious October day. "Prophecy was fulfilled" with dramatic consequences for mankind. The Millerites who held fast to Snow's October day formed the nucleus of God's faithful Remnant on earth. The rest of Christendom were hopeless apostates.

We can follow the rise and formation of this shut-door theology in the many insignificant papers that the Millerites circulated also after the Disappointment. *The Day-Star*, edited by a former Millerite, Enoch Jacobs from Cinninnati, Ohio, became the best known journal for shut-door believers. Other papers in this vein were *The Hope of Israel*, and *Hope Within the Veil*, both journals from Maine. But also in the open-door journals, such as *The Morning Watch* and *The Advent Herald* we can study reactions on the shut-door view. And one more journal should be mentioned. Father Samuel S. Snow's radical shut-door paper, *The Jubilee Standard*.

For all practical purposes we have decided to deal with the shut-door theology, although we are fully aware of the fact that in some details the shut-door brethren differed from one another. And most likely several of the shut-door fathers were unwilling to admit the fact, that basically all the various terms for belief in the closing of "the door" in October amounted to the same conclusion, namely, that in October God had rejected all those who repudiated the rationale of the Seventh Month movement. For one thing many radicals repudiated the term "the door of mercy," which they found unscriptural, and preferred their own designation, "the door of access" being closed against the world and the churches after October 22, 1844.<sup>26</sup> But after all such differences and some others as to when or how the atonement either had been completed or was going to end in a short little while, did not amount to anything worth the trouble allotting to them a special class of Millerites on Miller's left flank.

Needless to point out Shut Door in its real significance could only be applied, even by Millerites, to the New World, which to them in those

days of slow travelling more or less meant the "world." Immediately after the Disappointment immature views as to a kind of shut door against the world and the churches at large began to circulate among Millerites. Those hazy concepts took on a more orderly form when two Millerite preachers, Joseph Turner of Portland, Maine, and Apollos Hale, one time a Methodist minister, later a notable Millerite preacher, expressed a more cogent shut-door view in a single issue of a paper, called *The Advent Mirror*. This paper appeared in January 1845. The journal discussed the question, "Has Not the Saviour Come As the Bridegroom?" and was based on the parable of the ten virgins in Matthew 25.<sup>27</sup> To Millerites this parable was very familiar, since they tended to read their own history into that parable.<sup>28</sup>

*The Advent Mirror* tried to explain why Christ had not come in person to the earth on October 22 and defend the validity of Snow's October time by presenting a new theory, the so called Bridegroom theology.<sup>29</sup> Alluding at some kind of salvation-historical interpretation of the notable October day, the authors contended that an event of great importance had in fact taken place on October 22. Remarked the two writers: "The coming of the bridegroom would point out some change of work or office, on the part of our Lord in the *invisible* world . . . With him (Christ) it is within the veil—where he has gone to prepare a place for us: with them (the 'shut-door Millerites') it is outside the veil, where they are to wait and keep themselves ready till they pass into the marriage supper."<sup>30</sup> One can easily notice how this reasoning was based on the parable of the Ten Virgins. Quite logically the authors then took up another topic, the state of those who rejected the validity of the October date and this alleged change in God's dealings with man. There might still be a few "honest souls" for whom the shut-door brethren could work, but that was only in exceptional cases, suggested Turner and Hale. To labor for the conversion of the world, "the great mass of the world" would mean "labor lost" and be as futile as it would have been for the Israelites "when they were down at the Red Sea, to have turned about to convert the Egyptians."<sup>31</sup>

The *Advent Mirror* was an effort to demonstrate the "mystery" with the October date. The authors suggested that Christ was being crowned as Bridegroom in heaven, a short time prior to his personal coming to earth as King. The journal did not present a lasting explanation as to the October date, but for some months it sufficed as a theological rationale for the October date. The *Advent Mirror* contained the nucleus of the later so important *rejection* theology, intimately connected with the shut-door view.

Now it is the appropriate moment to define the original shut-door

concept. It meant two things: 1. Snow's October 22 *terminus* was the only correct calculation of Daniel's 2300 days; prophecy had been fulfilled on that fatal day only with far-reaching consequences for mankind; 2. this meant a drastic reduction of salvation for sinners and nominal Christians outside the Seventh Month movement. Those who willingly rejected Snow's October date, were *ipso facto* rejected by God. This was the main concept of the important "rejection theory" joined to the shut-door view. Again we notice how central Matthew chapter 25 is to this reasoning. To evangelical readers this shut-door reasoning most likely seems to be very ultraistic and fanatical, but to disappointed Millerites, who had lived through all the fervor and tense expectation at the end of the Seventh Month movement, the whole outlook was different. To them the Advent Mirror meant meat in due season, a joyful message which spurred them on to continue in isolation and a prolonged vigil for the *speedy* return of the Bridegroom.

Turner taught that Daniel 7:13 explained Christ's crowning as Bridegroom, prior to the Parousia, and not that event. Likewise he had it that the New Jerusalem, a literal city according to his understanding comprised the Bride and not the Church as most commentators taught.<sup>32</sup> We should know that Ellen White taught the same things.<sup>33</sup> Theologians would no doubt interpret Turner's and Hale's Advent Mirror exposition as a spiritualizing exposition, made against the desperate state the Millerites faced after their bitter disappointment. We also know that Turner and Hale abandoned their *temptative* Bridegroom theology, intended to support the notions about a shut door against the world and the churches, a few months later, when they joined the open-door majority group.<sup>34</sup> But still, the Advent Mirror became a kind of Bible to the hard-core shut-door brethren and its importance must not on any account be overlooked, as has often been the case in apologetical writers.<sup>35</sup> This writer has emphasized this fact as early as 1971.<sup>36</sup>

Another important proponent of the shut-door theology in its radical rejection profile was of course prestigious Samuel S. Snow. As much as he was feared and styled as a down-right fanatic among the opposite open-door party,<sup>37</sup> he was held in high esteem in the other camp. This fact, too, has been sadly overlooked in the S.D.A. church.<sup>38</sup> Snow and his co-editor, Barnett Matthias defined their shut-door position as follows: "Jesus Christ, the King of Kings, and Captain of our Salvation, is speedily coming to deliver his willing, waiting people, . . . Yet a few days of more trial, . . . and our ravished eyes shall behold the King in his beauty . . . With those who do not believe this great and glorious truth, we have nothing

now to do. *Our work with them is done. A wicked world, and a corrupt, apostate world-loving church, no longer share our sympathies, our labors, or our prayers. Their doom is sealed and it is just . . . They have rejected the world's last warning . . . the true Midnight Cry, and God has rejected them.*"<sup>39</sup> Whatever just criticism can be gathered up against Snow and his co-editor, no one can complain about the lucidity in their shut-door preaching.

Joseph Turner, Apollos Hale, Samuel S. Snow, Enoch Jacobs, J.B. Cook, Eli Curtis, E.C. Clemons, G.W. Peavey, J.D. Pickands, C.H. Pearson and e.g. the shut-door "sisters" of Maine: E.C. Clemons and C.S. Minor.<sup>40</sup> And one more shut-door preacher of some standing in his own group should be mentioned, also because he has been forgotten or overlooked so consistently by apologists, namely Israel Dammon, who meant so much to the Whites.<sup>41</sup> This brother was a consistent "doorite" who almost boasted about his abstention from any kind of evangelistic work. Dammon rested completely from Gospel endeavors, keeping the Sabbath in a "double sense" or resting from "all of our labors of a worldly nature, and also that kind of labor that we was (sic) once engaged in—the salvation of souls . . ." <sup>42</sup> As was the case in many other individuals Israel Dammon became very eccentric in his extreme shut-door theology. The open-door gospel-oriented brethren knew this and issued a special warning against Dammon.<sup>43</sup>

This conviction of the end of the "Gospel Age" since October 22, was a common denominator for all shut-door believers regardless of the degree of exclusive attitudes. J.D. Pickands writes bluntly that the "door of access"—to all intent as harsh as any "door-of-mercy" concept—was "shut last fall." After that point in history "the wise virgins" have no burden or responsibility for the salvation of the "sinners or Babylonians."<sup>44</sup> Another shut-door "evangelist," J.B. Cook, expressed the definitive fate of the world in a succinct paragraph: "There is finally, a necessity for the experience connected with *the* shut-door. There is need for the "shut door" to separate us finally and forever from the world, preparatory to ascension."<sup>45</sup>

Concepts, reminding us of Cromwell's Fifth Monarchy Men, are reflected in another letter: "Well I have no doubt that the time has come for us to ask God in faith to *kill* the wicked, and consume them from the earth: Just as we *formerly* asked him to save sinners,—ask expecting that he will do it at once,—when we ask for it . . . victory is ours: And we shall very soon take the Kingdom."<sup>46</sup>

Such harsh statements are shocking and not common among shut-door

believers. On the other hand, however, we should realize that there is only a short distance from the shut-door position of not praying for the "wicked" and downright hatred and thoughts of violence.

It comes as no surprise to read the utterances of the open-door brethren of their eccentric critics. Already from the beginning after the October time fiasco many reflecting Millerites realized that the whole time aspect was an illusion. The most outspoken critic of the shut-door view was of course Joshua V. Himes, but also George Storrs soon repudiated the time element.<sup>47</sup> Then others joined them in writing critical installments against what they thought to be gross error. To that category belonged prominent men like Elon Galusha and editor Joseph Marsh, the Adventist historian Isaac C. Wellcome and others. In March 1846 Elon Galusha expressed his criticism in no uncertain terms: "The erroneous notion that '43 and the 10th day of the 7th month "were sealed by the Spirit," has led some to believe that "the door of mercy is shut," and to ascribe to Christ a *first* second coming (as Bridegroom, not as judge and king), and others reject the doctrine of his *personal coming* totally . . ."<sup>48</sup>

Galusha also made a very pertinent remark in stating that the men behind the October time movement had misinterpreted the parable of the virgins in Mt. 25, since "parables are not designed to teach new doctrines, but only to illustrate those which are taught in the word of God, in literal language."<sup>49</sup> Incidentally Elon Galusha congratulated "our dear brother Pearson, sister Clemons and others" on their rejection of the whole shut door theology.<sup>50</sup>

Joseph Marsh had for a time lingered towards the shut-door line. For that reason he was anxious to declare his conversion to the open-door position. Hoping to be of some help to some radical shut-door brethren he wrote: "... My faith in '43, in the 10th day of the 7th month, was not gospel faith . . . *We must not charge our mistakes on God.* I tremble, sometimes, when men charge their errors and mistakes on God."<sup>51</sup>

The so-called moderates or open-door adventists blamed their shut-door brethren for a great deal of the prejudice and ill-feelings they met from the world and other Christians. It was a common thing among the more orthodox adventists to use the most disgusting terms about the hard-core shut-door adventists. A brother in Vermont must be considered representative in defining the shut-door theology as "Spiritualism" and a kind of Mesmerism. The latter term was much in vogue at the middle of the last century, when F.A. Mesmer's "animal magnetism" caused a great interest in New England.<sup>52</sup> The many trance prophets in the New World were also looked upon as a mesmeric influence.<sup>53</sup> Against this background

W. Pratt's warnings stand out in a forceful way. Referring to the shut-door view, he remarked: "They (his fellow-adventists in Vermont and Massachusetts) have stood in fear of opposing it (shut-door and perhaps visions), lest they should be found fighting against God. All know that we are acquainted with those *deluded* brethren, their cry is, "be careful," and their watchword, "TAKE CARE! you will quench the Spirit, you will steady the ark — opposing God's work," and the like."<sup>54</sup>

Pratt continued his criticism of the shut-door brethren by branding their exclusive and condemning attitude against "all that are not of their craft."<sup>55</sup> Pratt went on: "These views, such as feet-washing, kissing, and spiritual wives, . . . have divided, distracted, and discouraged *many* of the dear brethren in some of those places . . . These views, and many others that I might mention, have their origin from the shut door doctrine."<sup>56</sup> It is hard not to agree with Pratt, because the careful historian cannot help seeing how all those aberrations stemmed from the unfortunate time movement, in October 1844.

To sum up: Shut Door followed with consequence upon Miller's debacle in October and cut the unorganized adventist groups into two separate parts: open- and shut-door believers. Small at first this shut-door view was a dangerous faction to all Millerites, since it preserved the *continuum* with the impressive Seventh Month movement and hence could put up claims to be the only true remnant. Despite various minor differences all shut-door models agreed in the basic components: 1. Something of the utmost importance in the salvation-historical meaning happened on October 22, 1844, and 2; this meant that the door of mercy or the door of access to salvation was irrevocably closed against the world and "the fallen churches." 3. Finally, the shut-door theology was dependant upon belief in a very speedy Parousia. Turner's and Hale's *Advent Mirror* presentation showed that and so did the many contributions in the post-disappointment papers. Among the Sunday-keeping brethren shut-door lasted as a rule only a few months. Alhany practically marks the end of this unorthodox theology.

Our nearest assignment will be to examine the shut-door theology of the Sabbatarian group.

#### 4. Shut Door and the Sabbatarian Pioneers

Snow's and possibly Storrs' October *terminus* became the first distinctive "land mark" for the future Seventh-day Adventist church. Like the other

shut-door adventists the Sabbatarian pioneers interpreted the October disappointment as a major point in the salvation-history. Belief in shut-door, therefore, became a *conditio sine qua non* for eternal bliss for this faction of "The Little Flock." These conclusions come as no surprise to well-informed Adventist historians, for already in 1961 Arthur L. Spalding wrote that prior to their organization, in 1863, at at least up to 1855, the Sabbatarian group was known as "The Sabbath and Shut Door People."<sup>57</sup> We shall follow this dramatic development in early S.D.A. history during the first decade after the October disappointment.

It is only logical to begin our examination with James White (1821—1881), the most prestigious S.D.A. leader. Most likely James White became one of Joseph Turner's first converts. At least he made a statement in January 1845 to the effect that he received "light on the shut door."<sup>58</sup> An analysis of White's letter to Enoch Jacobs' *Day Star* reveals that White still subscribed to important elements of Turner's and Hale's *Advent Mirror* essay in September 1845, a few weeks prior to the adjusted date for the Second Coming.<sup>59</sup> By that time White reflected Turner's view that the atonement had *ended* on the fateful October day. We quote some pertinent paragraphs from White's letter: "The fall of Babylon commenced in the spring of '43 when the churches all around, began to fall into a cold state, and was complete on the 7th month '44 (I.e. on Oct. 22, 1844), *when the last faint ray of hope was taken up from a wicked world and church.* (See Bro. Peavy's remarks on this point in a communication headed, Jots and Titles, in the "Jubilee Standard.") At that time began the watchman's night. (verse 11.) Now look at ver. 16. "Within a *year* (the watching time) and all the glory of Kedar shall fail." The glory of Kedar is the glory of this dark world. (See Psa. 120:5). It began to fail when the day of God's vengeance *began*, when the seventh trump began to sound, when the third woe began on the 7th month. (See Bro. Rutledge's stirring article on the third woe, in the "Jubilee Standard," written last May.) . . . Well, "within a *year*" and the heavens and earth will shake, and all its glory fail. The year of his redeemed, or the year in which he will redeem his people commenced when the atonement *ended*, and will not close till the waiting sons of the morning shall plant their glad feet in the golden streets of the city of God. Hallelujah!"<sup>60</sup>

Because of his firm conviction that the delayed Parousia would occur in October 22, 1845, White went to great lengths in this declaration to believe in the finished atonement, not upon the cross, but on October 22, 1844. Likewise he maintained that the day of "God's vengeance" had begun in October 22, 1844. Accordingly, he had no desire to perform any

"gospel work" for the world or the churches, which did not care for the "deluded Millerites" anyway. At that junction the "cut off" remnant found its joy in counting the "watches," each one of the four comprising of three months, till the great Jubilee in October 1845.<sup>61</sup>

In 1847 James White made the observation that his fiancée, prophetess, Ellen Gould Harmon, had seen in vision that James and his shut-door friends would be disappointed in their expectations as to the parousia in October 1845.<sup>62</sup> If true, this vision must have been a kind of last minute revelation. White's instalments in the 1847 pamphlet reveal how preoccupied his mind was with an immediate parousia in 1847. Like many other persistent shut-door believers, James White wanted to outline the exact chronology of the last day events. The main apocalyptic events were: 1. The standing up of Michael (Dan. 12:1), 2. the final judgment and the closing of the atonement, 3. the time of trouble touching the world at large, 4. Jacob's trouble, of interest to the "remnant" or the waiting Bride of the Lamb only, 5. the Voice of God to state the day and hour of the Parousia, 6. the Voice of Christ to resurrect the dead saints, 7. the Second Coming itself.<sup>63</sup>

Against the orthodox position James White maintained that "the true children of God, and no others would know the day and the hour of the parousia." His authority for this remarkable statement was no vision given his fiancée, but the prestigious Father of the 1844 October time movement, Samuel S. Snow.<sup>64</sup> For this concept White followed Snow uncritically,<sup>65</sup> as he had bought Turner's shut-door theology in January 1845.

In order to get a correct view of James White's shut-door theology till the summer 1851, a good understanding of the layman preacher Owen R.L. Crosier's epoch-making *Day Star Extra*, Feb. 7, 1846, is required. Denominational writers mention that as early as the morning following the fatal October day in 1844, a little band of Millerites had found their way to Hiram Edson's farm in Canandaigua, New York, to find some solution to their problem as to the delayed parousia. Strolling across his corn field Edson is said to have received a kind of illumination of the mystery regarding the "cleansing of the sanctuary."<sup>66</sup> At that time Edson got a kind of revelation of what had been going on inside the *heavenly* sanctuary on October 22, 1844. Christ was said to have entered *into*, and not out of, the Most Holy Place on that day for the *first* time, since his ascension. The significance of that interpretation Edson was not able to elucidate in any detail. Spurred on by that "vision," three shut-door brethren, Edson, Crosier and F.B. Halin started several sessions of Bible studies in 1845. The conclusions of those studies Crosier reported in that

Day-Star Extra.<sup>67</sup> Crosier's article was called *The Law of Moses*. In that extended exposition the authors held that they had solved the problem in Miller's riddle as to the meaning of the sanctuary. Whereas Miller taught that the earth was the sanctuary to be cleansed, Crosier wrote that Daniel 8:14 referred to the so called heavenly sanctuary.<sup>68</sup> In his reasoning from the Jewish ceremonial "types" in Exodus and Leviticus, ch. 16 and 23, Crosier assured the readers that the real sanctuary to be cleansed was the heavenly temple. The new things in Crosier's article were a more extended explanation of the "dispensations," where he meant that the Gospel Dispensation ended on October 22, 1844 and the "new Dispensation" or the Age of Restitution, better known as the Age-to-Come Dispensation, began. A part of Crosier's peculiar exposition read like this: "We think that it has been shown that the atonement of the Gospel dispensation is the antitype of that made by the priests in the daily service, and that prepared for and made necessary the yearly atonement, and *cleansed* the Sanctuary and the people from all their sins. *It appears like certainty that the antitype of the daily administration of the priests and the vernal types stretch through the Gospel Dispensation: as that composed but part of the atonement and the antitypes*, we have good reason to believe that the remainder of the atonement, the yearly, will be fulfilled on the same principle as to time and occupy a period or dispensation of at least 1000 years. "That age" will be highly exalted above "this age," and form the stepping-stone to the unmingled, fadeless and eternal glories of the earth redeemed and Edenized again. Who can find fault, if the Lord has given us in the law the shadows of that age? Who will not rather seek the Spirit of Truth which shall "bring all things to your remembrance," even "the law of Moses" and "*show us things to come*," the good things to come? It will literally be an age of repairs, in which immortal saints will engage under the supervision of the King of Kings—an age of restitution, of blotting out of sin with all its direful effects, the age of redemption of the purchased possessions, the grand and final Jubilee, in which all the captives of Zion in and out of the grave, being released and gathered from the heathen and out of all countries, shall be cleansed from all their iniquities, possess their "own land" and the wastes shall be builded. . . . We have seen that the Dispensation following the Gospel Dispensation is a day of cleansing."<sup>69</sup>

This long quotation is certainly needed in order to let the unaware reader get a correct view of the connotations and framework of Crosier's and Edson's reasoning. Popular conceptions about the millennium, Apocatastasis, and the return of the Jews to Palestine were intermingled with the shut-door theology. Like all the rest in the shut-door camp, Crosier,

too, taught that momentous changes had taken place in heaven on October 1844. Accordingly, the “door” was forever closed. But no longer was this concept tied to a very limited time period. By joining the shut-door view to the glorious period of restitution, lasting for at least 1000 years, Crosier had blurred the line of demarcation between time and eternity and in fact given further force to Turner’s shut-door view. Whereas Turner and James White had believed that the atonement *ended*, or the sanctuary in heaven was cleansed on October 22, 1844, Crosier taught that this “cleansing” would last for an almost indefinite time.

It should also be made very clear that Crosier and Edson—to mention only the most prominent Sabbatarian contributors—were so preoccupied with the popular *chilistic* thinking as to the restitution of Israel in Palestine, that they got confused in their thinking: the heavenly sanctuary was in places removed out of sight to the preferment of the Sanctuary upon the purified new earth. The so called Gospel Dispensation will last till the resurrection, Crosier averred.<sup>70</sup> But since October 22, 1844, the 7th trumpet in Rev. 10 has *begun* to sound and from that date the two dispensations, the Gospel Age and that of the “fulness of times” are running side by side. So it will be during the transition time, prior to the Parousia and the arrival of the glorious millennium upon earth, according to the authors.<sup>71</sup>

In this manner Crosier explained the “cleansing of the sanctuary”: To *cleanse* the people, that they might be *clean* from all their sins “before the Lord” was the object of the atonement of the tenth day of the seventh month under the law: Lev. 16:30. The evidence is satisfactory to my mind that that day is the type of the Dispensation of the fulness of times, the age to come. What! are we to be sinful and unclean when immortal? Let us “be patient”. . . . The Lord says he will sprinkle them with clean water and cleanse them thereby after he has gathered them into their own land. Whether the sprinkling of water is literal or figurative, it shows that he will perform a cleansing process upon them.”<sup>72</sup>

In the conclusion of this remarkable article, Crosier again oscillated between different ideas. He wanted to emphasize that after October -44 the world lived in an age of “transition” between time and eternity. With the Seventh Month movement, or the so called Midnight Cry, the open door proclaimed in the time of the “Philadelphia” church was for ever shut.<sup>73</sup> On October 22, 1844 Christ received “the kingdom of this world” as Joseph Turner had suggested. “Rev. 10 gives in part the character and circumstances of the transition from the Gospel Dispensation to the following Dispensation,” remarked Crosier.<sup>74</sup> Crosier differed them from

other shut-door adherents or open-door chiliasts in two points: 1. he introduced a period of transition between the Gospel Dispensation and the so called Age-to-Come period. That age could last very long. Other shut-door believers taught that the longed for millennium had already begun from October 22, 1844. 2. Crosier held to the view that the atonement, whatever it meant, lasted at least 1000 years: whereas other "door-ites" maintained, that the atonement had ended on October 22, 1844. Crosier *preserved* important concepts from Turner's Advent Mirror article, e.g. the Bridgeroom theology.<sup>75</sup>

In his exposition Crosier also denied the orthodox view of the once-for-all completed atonement on the cross,<sup>76</sup> a concept which was to cause the Sabbatarian brethren considerable problems in their soteriology for more than a century!

There are no indications that James White or any one of his co-workers abandoned their shut-door theology, after the publication of Crosier's Day-Star article in 1846. On the contrary the Sabbatarian brethren issued new specimens of shut-door articles. More than a year later James White expressed his shut-door view in a blunt way, remarking that on October 22, 1844, Jesus "passed into the Holy of Holies, where he has since been a merciful high priest over the house'o God." Benefiting from Crosier's 1846 article he now expressed his revised view as to the atonement, writing that the atonement would continue for a time for the sake of the remnant, but there was no hope for the world at large. The very first lines of this essay read: "From the ascension to the shutting of the door, October 1844, Jesus *stood* with wide-spread arms of love, and merey: ready to receive, and plead the cause of every sinner, who would come to God by him."<sup>77</sup>

Joseph Bates and Hiram Edson were two of James White's most prominent co-workers in the early years. Bates, the famous seaman and Sabbath apostle, most likely accepted Shut Door from the beginning. We know for certain that by 1847 Ellen White explained in a letter to him how she related to Shut Door,<sup>78</sup> and in the same year Bates confessed his firm belief in the same concept in a dedication of one of her early visions. Like other shut-door brethren Bates had "closed up his work for the world". from October 22, 1844.<sup>79</sup> Living under the same mentality of a very near parousia, Bates, too, expected the end of world affairs to take place at specific dates in the years following upon the disappointment. At first Bates wrote that the apocalyptic "sealing" would take place in 1849.<sup>80</sup> Enlarging on Crosier's immature views from 1846, Bates expected the "cleansing of the sanctuary" in the following year.<sup>81</sup> In that pamphlet he stated that there was no longer any Mediator for the world in heaven, after

1844. Christ had "withdrawn himself into the Holiest," where the world and the "rebellious churches" no more could reach him.<sup>82</sup> Such concepts were in line with James White's shut-door view.<sup>82a</sup> In the same pamphlet Bates summarized what he meant with his "present truth" message. "The Present Truth" of the third angel's message is "The Sabbath and Shut Door," he emphasized.<sup>83</sup>

Hiram Edson had been responsible for the contents in Crosier's 1846 exposition and contributed money towards its publication.<sup>84</sup> It is therefore not surprising to notice that Edson was markedly influenced by Crosier's Age-to-Come views. The year Bates expected the sealing to be completed, Edson published a booklet, "... showing the final return of the Jews in 1850."<sup>85</sup> Shut Door in force from October 22, 1844, was a prominent feature in this not too lucid work.<sup>86</sup>

Fresh essays on Shut Door<sup>87</sup> followed in 1849, when James White on the specific recommendation of his wife,<sup>88</sup> Sabbatarian prophetess, published the journal named the Present Truth. This paper certainly lived up to its claims, to explain Shut Door and the Sabbath to the world. *Present Truth* ran for eleven issues and is replete with expositions on the October events as the time when God closed the door to the world. In the new journal White and co-workers, such as David Arnold, gave additional force to Shut Door in its original double meaning. The atonement had begun in October, 1844, in the Most Holy Place in heaven, and from the same point of time the door of salvation was shut against the world at large.<sup>89</sup>

Even as late as 1850, when we discern the first signs of a transition from an absolutely closed door against "the wicked world" to a door standing somewhat open for "honest" souls, Ellen White encouraged James White to reissue old shut-door articles, printed by leaders in the Millerite movement before the open-door stance had been worked out.<sup>90</sup> There were also two articles by J.B. Cook, the much feared shut-door Sabbatarian brother. Some editing was done on the republication. The publishing committee, Hiram Edson, David Arnold, Geo. W. Holt, Samuel W. Rhodes, and James White, added the subtitle, "Containing Thrilling Testimonies, Written in the Holy Spirit, by Many of the Leaders in the Second Advent Cause. Showing Its Divine Origin and Progress."<sup>91</sup>

The editor capitalized certain key concepts, and omitted some parts in Crosier's 1846 article on the sanctuary, sections expressing the Age-to-Come views of the three men more openly.<sup>92</sup>

The last direct reference to the shut-door view this writer has found in the *Advent Review* in the summer of 1851. Then James White reported that "Elder Jesse Thompson" gave up his evangelical activities in October,

1844, when "our work for the world closed."<sup>93</sup> Lest some should get wrong conclusions from what has been said of the transition from a shut to an open door in 1850—1851, it may be helpful to remind those students about articles in the old style, published also in 1850. An anonymous writer, possibly James White, then wrote an essay, called "The Sanctuary, 2300 Days, and The Shut Door." In this exposition, the author repeated Snow's and Turner's shut-door theology to let the end of the 2300 "days" in Daniel 8:14 reach to October 22, 1844, when the "door" in Mt. 25:10 was supposed to have closed against the world and the churches at large. The author continued the tradition from the days of the Seventh Month movement to interpret the parable about the Ten Virgins as a prophecy foretelling the history of the Millerites.<sup>94</sup> An important portion of the article explained the shut-door view as follows: "... the advent people ... anxiously expected to see Jesus on the tenth day of the seventh month (i.e. October 22, 1844). When we came up to that point of time, all our sympathy, burden and prayers for sinners *ceased*, and the unanimous feeling and testimony was, that our work for the world was finished for ever ... The reason why the living branches felt that their work was done for the world, was, because the 2300 days were ended, and the time had come for Jesus to shut the door of the Holy, and pass into the Most Holy, to receive the kingdom, and cleanse the Sanctuary. This change, so wonderfully described in Dan. viii, 13, 14, answers to the coming of the bridegroom and shut door, in the parable."<sup>95</sup>

This important contribution shows how the author as late as the early summer of 1850 still held on to a mixture between Turner's Bridegroom theology and Crosier's sanctuary exposition. Very frankly this author also confesses his unmitigated faith in the Shut Door. The remainder of the article reveals that the "only place for the shut door was in 1844. Amen." And since then both the "sinners" and "the professed church" are left without hope of salvation! They rejected the interpretation of October 22 and hence God has rejected them."<sup>96</sup>

We accordingly find only some tokens of change in 1850.

Stimulated by the republication of Joseph Marsh's *Voice of Truth* article, August 13, 1845, the Sabbatarian shut-door group seems to have envisioned the end of their exclusive shut-door view, for in that period of transition they began to realize that at least children to Millerites stood a fair chance to reach heaven. We quote a passage: "At the end of the 2300 days, our high priest bore into the most holy, *on the breast plate of judgement*, all who were within the reach of salvation.

And among those who were borne in, I believe, were some that had not

had the light on the second advent doctrine, and had not rejected it, but were living according the best light they had."<sup>97</sup> In addition to those "honest souls" were non-Christians who took an interest in the Adventist emphasis, and finally young children in adventist families, children who were too young for comprehending the Millerite position in October, 1844.<sup>98</sup>

Even in 1850 Sabbatarian shut-door defenders could not go to such liberal lengths as to accepting those categories on a full scale range: but the "door" stood on ajar and might open fully after some years.<sup>99</sup>

None of the pioneers in the shut-door Sabbatarian group formulated any theory of his own on Shut Door, but merely accepted what other radicals had worked out. It is true that Crosier for a short time was a Sabbatarian, but somewhat later he repudiated the whole thing, even his article on the sanctuary, and became a vehement opponent of the Sabbatarian brethren.<sup>100</sup> For this reason Crosier should not be taken as one of the actual pioneers of the S.D.A. church. James White and Bates imbibed their shut-door theology from Turner, Snow and Crosier. The latter expressed a novel aspect of the "door" which was very unclear and hazardous, containing shut-door views together with the popular Age-to-Come ideas. Regardless of such aberrations from orthodoxy his exposition meant a great deal to the Sabbatarian shut-door pioneers and made the transition possible from a shut to an open door in 1851–52, with a preserved continuum between 1851 and 1844.

## CHAP. I Notes

1. Ernest R. Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism*, Chicago 1970, ch. 2. Francis D. Nichol, *The Midnight Cry*. Washington D.C. 1944, passim. Ingemar S. Lindén, *Biblicism, Apokalyptik, Utopi*. Adventismens historiska utveckling i USA samt dess svenska utveckling till o. 1939. Acta Univ. Ups. Stud. Hist.-Ecccl. Ups. 19. Uppsala 1971, chs 1–3. Ingemar Lindén, *The Last Trump*. An historico-genetical study of some important chapters in the making and development of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Studies in the Intercultural

History of Christianity. Vol. 17. Frankfurt/Main 1978, ch. 1–2.

David Leslie Rowe, *Thunder and Trumpets: The Millerite Movement and Apocalyptic Thought in Upstate New York, 1800–1845*. A diss. Presented to the Graduate Faculty of Virginia in Candidacy for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy. Corcoran Dept. of History. Univ. of Virginia, May, 1974, passim.

Edwin S. Gaustad, (Ed.) *The Rise of Adventism*. New York 1974, chs. 7, 9–10.

2. Lindén, *The Last Trump*, pp. 59–61.

3. LeRoy Edwin Froom, *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*, IV. Washington D.C. 1954 p. 819.
4. Lindén, *The Last Trump*, p. 61.
5. Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, Washington D.C. 1911, p. 403.
6. *Advent Herald*, Boston, Vol. XIV: 17, p. 129. Nov. 27, 1847.
7. *Day-Star*, Cincinnati, Sept. 6, 1845.
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Ibid.*
10. *Advent Herald*, Boston, Feb. 11, 1846, p. 5.
11. *Ibid.*, Dec. 11, 1847, p. 151, Mar. 11, 1846, p. 38.
12. *Advent Herald*, Boston, Dec. 11, 1847, p. 151.
13. Lindén, *The Last Trump*, pp. 85, 86.
14. Cf. *Advent Herald*, Boston, Mar. 18, 1846, p. 42.
15. Brother Cruft from New York penned this letter on Oct. 6, 1845. Cf. *Day-Star*, as quoted in Lindén 1971, p. 69.
16. *Day-Star*, Oct. 25, 1845, pp. 10, 11.
17. Cf. above, pp. 14—15.
18. Lindén, *The Last Trump*, pp. 80, 81.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 80.
20. *Proceedings of the Mutual Conference of Adventists* held in the City of Albany, the 29th and 30th of April, and 1st of May 1845, New York 1845, pp. 8, 9, 21, 22, 24—28. (Hereafter quoted as *Proceedings 1845*.)
21. *Ibid.*, pp. 3—6. This is an evaluation.
22. Lindén, *The Last Trump*, pp. 81, 82.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 82.
24. *Proceedings 1845*, p. 30.
25. Cf. below, ch. 14.
26. There is no clear distinction in meaning between the two terms. Thus a hard-core shut-door brother like J.D. Pickands preferred the alternative phrase, "door of access." *Day-Star*, Sep. 20, 1845, p. 25. Cf. Poehler op.cit. p. 76.
27. The only issue of this journal was printed in Boston. It was a typical feature in the Millerite movement to communicate with the believers and the world in their small papers. The printed organs also helped to preserve unity among the unorganized groups.
28. One of the most significant representative of the great Miller journals expressed that key concept, namely *Midnight Cry*. It is important to know that this parable about the virgins in Matthew 25, and not the later term of the so-called "open and shut door" in Rev. 3:7, is the nucleus of *all* shut-door theology.
29. *Advent Mirror*. Boston. Jan. 1845, pp. 1—3.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 4.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 2.
33. Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, Washington D.C. 1911, pp. 426, 427.
34. Hale repudiated his shut-door philosophy at least by the time of the Albany Conference, in May, 1845, but Turner kept his shut-door views somewhat longer. But by August, 1846, he had given up that extreme "shut-door" view. (Cf. *The Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, Washington D.C. 1966, pp. 1334, 1335.)
35. Cf. Francis D. Nichol, *Ellen G. White and Her Critics*. Washington, D.C. 1951, pp. 161—286, where he reserved more than one hundred pages to a discussion of the "shut-door question" did not credit Turner a single line for his contribution. The same decision is evident in L.E. Froom, *The Prophetic Faith of our Fathers*. IV. Washington, D.C., 1954, pp. 839, 840, where the great Adventist authority contended that Turner belonged to a "small fanatical group," with an "extreme" shut-door view, "quite separate from the Sabbatarian Adventists and their version of the "door." In Froom's *Movement of Destiny*. Washington, D.C., 1971, the whole problem of shut-door is bypassed. Cf. pp. 77—90.

- Arthur L. White's duplicated "statement" on Ellen G. White and the Shut Door Question (1972) does not even refer to Turner's importance to the Sabbatarian shut-door view.
36. Ingemar Lindén, *Biblicism Apokalyptik Utopi*, Uppsala 1971, pp. 71—79.
  37. Cf. *Advent Herald*, Feb. 25, 1846, pp. 42, 43.
  38. See note 35, ch. 1.
  39. *Morning Watch*, Mar. 29, 1845, p. 94, quoted in David Arthur, "Come Out of Babylon:" A Study of Millerite Separation and Denominationalism, 1840—1865. Unpubl. Ph.D. diss. Univ. of Rochester 1961, p. 106. Italics added.
  40. In the informal shut-door "bands" women served in leading positions as "exhorteresses," teachers and visionaries.
  41. *Day-Star*, (Cincinnati, Ohio) Sep. 20, 1845, p. 31. Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. II, Battle Creek, Mich. 1860, pp. 40—42.
  42. *Day-Star*, Sep. 20, 1845, p. 31.
  43. *Advent Herald*, Mar. 26, 1845. *The Day-Star*, Aug. 5, 1845, p. 51.
  44. *Day-Star*, Sep. 20, 1845.
  45. *Ibid.*, Feb. 28, 1846, p. 60.
  46. *Ibid.*, (G.W. Peavey) Jan. 24, 1846, p. 31. Italics added.
  47. *The Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, Washington D.C. 1966, p. 1264.
  48. *Advent Herald*, (Boston) Mar. 18, 1846, p. 42.
  49. *Ibid.*, p. 43.
  50. *Ibid.*, p. 44.
  51. *Ibid.*, June 5, 1847, p. 141. Italics added.
  52. *Advent Herald*, (Boston) Feb. 18, 1846, pp. 14, 15. Cf. Lindén 1978, p. 159, and Ronald Numbers, *Ellen G. White—Prophetess of Health*, New York 1976, chs. 2—4.
  53. *Advent Herald*, Feb. 18, 1846, pp. 14, 15.
  54. *Ibid.*, p. 14. Emphasis added.
  55. *Ibid.*
  56. *Ibid.* Emphasis supplied.
  57. Arthur L. Spalding, *Origin and Progress of the Seventh-day Adventists*, I, Washington D.C. 1961, p. 162.
  58. *Day-Star*, (Cincinnati) Sep. 20, 1845, p. 26. Italics supplied.
  59. *Ibid.*
  60. *Ibid.*, Emphasis supplied.
  61. *Ibid.*
  62. James and Ellen White, *A Word to the Little Flock*, Brunswick, Maine, May 30, 1847, p. 22.
  63. *Ibid.*, pp. 1—11.
  64. *Ibid.*, p. 5. White referred to Snow's article on the October time calculation in *True Midnight Cry*, Aug. 22, 1844.
  65. Needless to mention there is no scholarly value in this obscure "old English version" some Millerites were referring to.
  66. LeRoy Edwin Froom, *Prophetic Faith*, IV, Washington D.C. 1954, p. 881, where F. relies upon a late undependable Edson manuscript.
  67. *The Day-Star Extra*, (Cincinnati), Feb. 7, 1846.
  68. *Ibid.*, pp. 42, 43.
  69. *Ibid.*, p. 42. Italics added.
  70. *Ibid.*, p. 44.
  71. *Ibid.*
  72. *Ibid.*, p. 42.
  73. *Ibid.*, pp. 43, 44.
  74. *Ibid.*
  75. *Ibid.*, p. 44.
  76. *Ibid.*, p. 41.
  77. *A Word to the Little Flock*, 1847, p. 2. Italics added.
  78. EGW to Bates, Jul. 13, 1847. White Estate Archives, Washington D.C.
  79. *A Vision*. Printed by Joseph Bates, Fairhaven, Mass. Apr. 7, 1847.
  80. Joseph Bates, *A Seal of the Living God*. A Hundred Forty-Four Thousand, of the Servants of God Being Sealed, in 1849. New Bedford, 1849.
  81. Joseph Bates, *An Explanation of the Typical and the Anti-Typical Sanctuary*,

*By the Scriptures*. New Bedford, 1850.

82. Ibid., pp. 10—13.
- 82a. Ibid., p. 16.
83. Ibid.
84. Day-Star Extra, Feb. 7, 1846, p. 44. Spalding op.cit. p. 111.
85. Hiram Edson, *An Exposition of Scripture Prophecy; showing the Final Return of the Jews in 1850*. Canandaigua, New York, 1849.
86. Ibid., pp. 4—23. E. wrote about the end of the Gentile Times as from Oct. 22, 1844. Then followed logically the Times of the Jews.
87. The term designated 1) the fulfillment of Dan. 8:14, "prophecy fulfilled," and 2) the door of salvation closed against the world and the churches.
88. Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts*, II, Battle Creek, Mich. 1860, pp. 115, 116.
89. James White wrote to friends in 1848: "The principle points upon which we dwell as *present truth* are the 7th Day Sabbath and Shut Door." James White to Bro. and Sr. Hastings. Oct. 2, 1848.
- WEA (White Estate Archives) Wash. D.C. Italics added.
90. James White to E. Hamilton, N.Y. July 21, 1850. WEA, Wash. D.C.
91. *Advent Review*. "Special Issue," Auburn, N.Y. Printed by Henry Oliphant, title page.
92. Ibid., pp. 37—48.
93. *Second Advent and Sabbath Herald Extra*, Saratoga Springs, N.Y. Jul. 21, 1851, p. 3.
94. *Present Truth*, May 1850, pp. 78, 79.
95. Ibid., p. 79. Italics added.
96. *Present Truth*, May 1850, p. 79.
97. *Advent Review Extra*, Sep. 1850, p. 3. Emphasis supplied.
98. Ibid.
99. Cf. Gottfried Oosterwal, *Mission Possible*, Nashville, Tennessee, 1972, p. 24.
100. In the beginning of 1850s he penned a long series of articles against the Sabbath. Those articles were discussed at length in the *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, 1852, *passim*.



## II Ellen Gould White (1827—1915) and the Shut Door

### 1. Some General Observations about EGW and Some Research Problems

In denominational works EGW<sup>1</sup> is generally introduced as a unique latter-day prophet designed to complete God's revelation to mankind. There is a marked tendency to promote her "Testimonies," a common term for the Ellen G. White books, as an *inspired* commentary to the Bible, an indispensable key for a correct understanding of Scripture.<sup>2</sup> In fact EGW is usually referred to as "The Spirit of Prophecy."<sup>3</sup>

In theory, however, SDA officials always deny that the "Testimonies" are on par with the Bible,<sup>4</sup> but in reality the step between the canonical books of Scripture and the EGW books is often difficult to discern. For not only are her counsels said to be inspired in matters spiritual; but also her statements in the field of medicine, science, or even in history are looked upon as dependable or infallible in substance.<sup>5</sup> This position explains the heated discussions between representatives for the Ellen G. White Estate and Adventist historians in reference to EGW's use of history in *Great Controversy*.<sup>6</sup> Similarly, this undertaking of writing a separate book on the Shut Door problem, would perhaps be unheard of but for the absolute claims put up for the prophetess.

In order to get a reasonable understanding of EGW, it is necessary to have a fairly good view of Millenarian prophets and visionaries in general and of the subculture in Maine at the beginning of the 19th century. Ellen Harmon, as she was called prior to her marriage to the Millerite preacher, James White (1821—1881), was born into a poor, but honest and thrifty Methodist family in Gorham, Maine.<sup>7</sup> Her formal education was rapidly ended at nine, when Ellen was badly hurt by a stone, thrown at her head. At twelve she was converted at a Methodist camp-meeting and baptised in the cold Atlantic by the Methodist minister.

The Harmons enjoyed spontaneous praise-and-prayer meetings, so called "social meetings," where the members of the "class" or the "band" were supposed to take an active part with *personal* testimonies.<sup>8</sup> To EGW this requirement was a kind of ordeal, she tells us many years later.<sup>10</sup>

Accompanying revivalism was of course a sort of *enthusiastic* religion. Like most evangelicals the Harmons believed in outward signs as tokens of sanctification. Falling to the floor under the influence of the Holy Spirit, as they interpreted the case, was one such sign. Young Ellen Harmon also experienced this holiness manifestation.<sup>11</sup> Characteristic features in this subculture were belief in the importance of remarkable dreams, visions and occult manifestations, not least dangerous phenomena generally styled as "mesmerism."<sup>12</sup> God and the Devil, heaven and hell, good and evil spirits were very real elements in this folk religion.<sup>13</sup>

Apocalyptic revivalism entered the lives of the Harmon family in earnest with "Father William Miller,"<sup>14</sup> but even earlier millenarian beliefs had scared members in the family.<sup>15</sup> After Miller had given campaigns in Portland, in 1842, the Harmons tended to find their spiritual home increasingly more with the Christians who believed in Miller's apocalyptic calculations. It was therefore only logical that they parted company with the Methodists.<sup>16</sup>

After the disappointment Ellen Harmon had found a suitable moment to make herself known as one of New England's many millenarian prophets of the shut-door persuasion.<sup>17</sup> An English historian, J. F. C. Harrison, has recently described the significant traits in millenarian prophets in general. When his characteristics are tested on EGW, as a *young* prophetess, it is obvious how well his description fits in with her career. Harrison mentions that a millenarian prophet or visionary is one who "based his claims on divine revelation." The prophet is "commanded" to do and say what he does." He is most often an unpaid layman, outside the boundaries of "the normal religious structures." He gets his charisma as soon as a group of followers believes in him. It is, moreover, revelation, *whereas the orthodoxy maintains that "the canon of scriptures is closed" once for all times.* The prophet is also seldom highly educated. Inevitably he finds himself "in opposition to the priesthood and the canon of religious orthodoxy."<sup>18</sup> Instead the prophet is bound "to break with the established order; . . . he stands apart in society, . . . and is a potential agent of change."<sup>19</sup> Such observations also apply to the millenarian prophetess, Ellen Gould White.

For several reasons research in EGW is difficult. In the first place many important documents are "unreleased" or not available to scholars, who want to get freedom to interpret the material quite apart from denominational policy.<sup>20</sup> Another major obstacle is the polished and sometimes heavily edited versions in the official printings. Thus, if the researcher wants to get a realistic understanding of genuine early EGW documents

in the shut-door period (1845– circa 1851) he should also with necessity study the documents in non-official, albeit genuine, collections such as the Percy T. Magan collection or the duplicated Hiram Edson copies.<sup>21</sup>

This writer was privileged to study several non-released documents, in fact all the available exhibits for this period, in the Ellen G. White Estate in 1967 due to a special letter of commendation.<sup>22</sup> In this collection there are several genuine formerly never published EGW letters, taking the form of visions. Other valuable sources are the early printed visions, prior to 1851. These difficult to get hold on EGW documents differ markedly in form and substance from the later *revised* printed material in a booklet such as “*Experience and Views*.”<sup>23</sup> The differences are so great in places that one can hardly notice the original version in this almost contemporary source!

## 2. Edson's Version Reveals the Earliest EGW Manipulations?

In order to demonstrate the character of the early visions in the oldest forms, the two sources will be compared here at some length. Hiram Edson, one of the most trusted of the pioneers in the Sabbatarian group, copied three important EGW visions from the year 1850. They are called the Oswego vision, the Sutton vision, and the Dorchester vision.<sup>24</sup>

A suitable test case for the opening is a comparison between the contents in the installment, *The Gathering Time*, and Edson's notations. The two sources will be reproduced. There are many direct quotations or allusions to the Edson material in the later printed EGW sources, such as *Experience and Views*.

### A

(a) *Experience and Views*: September 23, the Lord showed me that He had stretched out His hand the second time to recover the remnant of His people.<sup>25</sup> And that effort must be redoubled in this gathering time. In the scattering, Israel<sup>26</sup> was smitten and torn: but now in the gathering time God will heal and bind up His people.<sup>27</sup> In the scattering, efforts made to spread the truth had but little effect, accomplished but little or nothing: but in the gathering, when God has set His hand to gather His people, efforts to spread the truth will have their designed effect. I saw that it was wrong for any to refer to the scattering for examples to govern us now in the gathering; for if God should do no more for us now than He did then, Israel would never be gathered.

I have seen that the 1843 chart was directed by the hand of the Lord, and that it should not be altered: that the figures were as He wanted them; that His hand was over and hid a mistake in some of the figures,<sup>28</sup> so that none could see it, until His hand was removed."

*(b) The Hiram Edson version: A vision the Lord gave me in Oswego, July 29, 1850.*

I saw some in Zion that were languishing, they were dormant and unbelieving. I asked the Angel<sup>29</sup> if Zion should languish. Said the Angel, she is rising never to fall again. *God has stretched out his hand, the second time to recover the remnant of his people.* I saw some that met together at the conference at Oswego and vicinity were not right; they do not partake of the spirit of the lovely Jesus; they have not vital godliness and unless they soon partake of the spirit of Jesus, and have their heart sanctified by the truth they profess to believe, they will be purged out of the camp of Israel. I saw there needed to be a searching of heart among them. Said the Angel, thou art upon the enchanted ground, dost thou not see it? Awake and arise and put on the strength of the Lord. The powers of darkness are rising. *Art thou rising? Is it not getting the victory over thee?* I was pointed back to the children of Israel in Egypt.<sup>30</sup>

#### **Present Truth, Nov. 1850**

*I saw that the old chart was directed by the Lord, and that not a peg of it should be altered without inspiration. I saw that the figures on the chart were as God wanted them, and that His hand was over and hid a mistake in some of the figures so that none could see it until his hand was removed.*<sup>31</sup>

(c) Then "saw in relation to the "daily". Dan. 8:12, that the word "sacrifice" was supplied by man's wisdom, and does not belong to the text; and that the Lord gave the correct view to those who gave the judgment hour cry. When union existed, before 1844, nearly all were united on the correct view of the "daily"; but in the confusion since 1844, other views have been embraced, and darkness and confusion have followed. Time has not been a test since 1844, and it will never again be a test."<sup>32</sup>

#### **The Present Truth, Nov. 1850. Warning against the "gathering" in Jerusalem**

The Lord has shown me that the message must go, and be proclaimed to the scattered children of the Lord, but it must not hung on time. I saw that

some were getting a false excitement, arising from preaching time; but the third angel's message is stronger than time can be. I saw that this message can stand on its own foundation, and needs not time to strengthen it; and that it will go in mighty power, and do its work, and will be cut short in righteousness.

Then I was pointed to some who are in the great error of believing that it is their duty to go to old Jerusalem, and think they have a work to do there before the Lord comes. Such a view is calculated to take the mind and interest from the present work of the Lord, under the message of the third angel; for those who think that they are yet to go to Jerusalem, will have their minds there, and their means will be withheld from the cause of present truth, to get themselves and others there. I saw that such a mission would accomplish no real good, that it would take a long while to make a very few of the Jews believe even in the first advent of Christ, much more to believe in His second advent. I saw that Satan had greatly deceived some in this thing, and that souls all around them in this land could be helped by them, and led to keep the commandments of God; but they were leaving them to perish. I also saw that Old Jerusalem never would be built up; and that Satan was doing his utmost to lead the minds of the children of the Lord into these things now, *in the gathering time*, to keep them from throwing their whole interest into the present work of the Lord, and cause them to neglect the necessary preparation for the day of the Lord.

The Lord showed me that TIME had not been a test since 1844, and that time will never again be a test.

Then I was pointed to some who are in great error, that the saints are yet to go to Old Jerusalem, before the Lord comes. Such a view is calculated to take the mind and interest from the present work of God, under the message of the third angel; for if we are to go to Jerusalem, then our minds will naturally be there, and our means will be withheld from other uses to get the saints to Jerusalem. I saw that the reason why they were left to go into this great error, is because they have not confessed and forsaken their errors, that they have been in for a number of years past."<sup>33</sup>

Before we continue with our examination of the character of the early EGW versions, it is certainly necessary to comment on the revisions in the 1851—1882 versions of the earliest printed EGW statements on the popular idea of the gathering of the Jews to Palestine, immediately before the parousia. In the oldest source we find direct references to Sabbatarian adventists in immediate danger of falling victims of the Age-to-Come teachings. In other words, in this version, it is not difficult to notice how

the Whites fought the Age-to-Come views of Crosier and Hiram Edson, the two foremost proponents of that view among the Sabbatarians. There are no proofs that EGW first expressed this criticism. She writes: "If we are to go . . . then *our* means will be withheld to get the saints to Jerusalem." Her main concern was not to combat the Age-to-Come views in the first place, but to save money for the cause. In the 1851 revised version she is making great pains to stand aloof from such allusions, evidently to give the readers the impression that Sabbatarian pioneers were not directly involved in this heresy. Now the *editor* employs a different language altogether in some places. He writes, "*those who think that they* are yet to go to Jerusalem, will have *their* minds there, and *their* means will be withheld from the present truth, to get *themselves and others* there."

No longer does EGW speak about the "saints" going there. And most remarkable, yet, is undoubtedly the final paragraph which has been completely rewritten in the 1851 text, because in the 1850 rendering of that part we get the information that this obsession with Palestine and the Jews returning there, prior to the second advent, had captivated the minds of some members of the Little Flock "for a number of years past." Such proofs should make us cautious and teach us a lesson: it is always very important to try to get down to the *oldest* versions of any EGW vision, because they have a strong tendency to change over the years, until the original meaning might be completely lost.

## B

*The "Sutton Vision" according to Edson's version, and according to the revised view in Experience and Views.*

In October, 1850, or possibly in late September, 1850,<sup>34</sup> there was a small gathering of Sabbatarian adventists at Sutton, Vermont. Such meetings were generally called "conferences" in those days. We shall notice how widely these two versions differ from one another in several ways, but also where they are alike.

### 1. Experience and Views: The last Plagues and the Judgment

At the general conference of believers in the present truth, held at Sutton, VT., September, 1850, I was shown that seven last plagues will be poured out after Jesus leaves the sanctuary.<sup>35</sup> Said the angel, "It is the wrath of God and the Lamb that cause the destruction or death of the wicked. At the voice of God the saints will be mighty and terrible as an army with banners; but they will not then execute the judgment written. The execution of the judgment will be at the close of the one thousand years.

After the saints are changed to immortality and caught up with Jesus, after they receive their harps, their robes, and their crowns, and enter the city, Jesus and the saints sit in judgment. The books are opened—the book of life and the book of death. The book of life contains the good deeds of the saints; and the book of death contains the evil deeds of the wicked. These books are compared with the statute-book, the Bible, and according to that men are judged. The saints in unison with Jesus, pass judgment upon the wicked dead. “Behold ye,” said the angel, “the saints, in unison with Jesus, sit in judgment, and mete out to the wicked according to the deeds done in the body, and that which they must receive at the execution of the judgment is set off against their names.” This, I saw, was the work of the saints with Jesus, through the one thousand years, in the Holy City before it descends to the earth. Then at the close of the one thousand years, Jesus, with the angels and all the saints, leaves the Holy City, and while He is descending to the earth with them, the wicked dead are raised, and then the very men that “pierced Him,” being raised, will see Him afar off in all His glory, the angels and saints with Him, and will wail because of Him. They will see the nails in His hands and in His feet, and where they thrust the spear into His side. The prints of the nails and the spear will then be His glory. It is at the close of the one thousand years that Jesus stands upon the Mount of Olives, and the mount parts asunder and becomes a mighty plain. Those who flee at that time are the wicked, who have just been raised. Then the Holy City comes down and settles on the plain. Satan then imbues the wicked with his spirit. He flatters them that his army is large, and that they can overcome the saints and take the city.<sup>36</sup>

While Satan was rallying his army, the saints were in the city, beholding the beauty and glory of the Paradise of God. Jesus was at their head, leading them. All at once the lovely Saviour was gone from our company; but soon we heard His lovely voice, saying, “Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” We gathered about Jesus, and just as He closed the gates of the city, the curse was pronounced upon the wicked. The gates were shut. Then the saints used their wings and mounted to the top of the wall of the city. Jesus was also with them; His crown looked brilliant and glorious. It was a crown within a crown, seven in number. The crowns of the saints were of the most pure gold, decked with stars. Their faces shone with glory, for they were in the express image of Jesus;<sup>37</sup> and as they arose, and moved all together to the top of the city, I was enraptured with the sight.<sup>38</sup>

Then the wicked saw what they had lost; and fire was breathed from God upon them, and consumed them. This was the execution of the judgment.<sup>39</sup> The wicked then received according as the saints, in unison with Jesus had meted out to them during the one thousand years. The same fire from God that consumed the wicked, purified the whole earth. The broken ragged mountains melted with fervent heat, the atmosphere also, and all the stubble was consumed.<sup>40</sup> Then our inheritance opened before us, glorious and beautiful, and we inherited the whole earth made new. We all shouted with a loud voice, “Glory; Alleluja!”

## 2. The Edson Version of 1850: The Sutton Vision, copied by H. Edson

A vision the Lord gave me at Sutton, Vt., October 1850. I saw the loveliness of Jesus and the love the angels have for one another, said the angel, can ye not

behold their love? Follow it. Just so, God's people must love one another. Rather let blame fall on thyself than on a brother; *I was then pointed back to western New York and saw that Bro. Bates did not give the message*—"sell that ye have and give alms" in its clear light. It caused some to follow for the loaves and fishes, and now they are ready to be purged out. Falsehoods have been in their mouths. *I saw that Bro. Bates holding up "sell what ye have" in a wrong light had caused those who had been coveting others' property to take levity from it and to rejoice and triumph, and had also caused those who had property to hold on to it. Those who had been coveting were zealous to attend every conference with their families not to glorify God, but for the loaves and the fishes. They had better remained at home and worked with their hands to supply the wants of their families, and to have something to give to sustain the cause of truth. I saw that Bro. Bates erred again in praying for the sick before unbelievers. I saw if any among us were sick and called for the elders of the church to pray over them, we should follow the example of Jesus. He went into an inner chamber. And we should go into a room by ourselves, separate entirely from unbelievers, and then the atmosphere would not be polluted by them. By faith we could take hold on God and draw down the blessing.*

*I saw that God's cause was dishonored and reproached in New York at the general conference by praying for the sick in the midst of unbelievers. I also saw that Bro. Bates erred in attending the washing of saints' feet and the communion among unbelievers. It only causes reproach to come on the cause of God. I saw that the example of Jesus should be followed. He took his disciples away separate from the wicked, washed their feet, and then gave them to eat of the broken body, and gave them to drink of the juice of the vine to represent his spilled blood. I saw that Bro. Bates and all the shepherds should be careful in these things, and move understandingly, and follow the example of Jesus in these things. I saw that a Judas might be among us from time to time; that would appear to be with us, but they would eat and drink to their own damnation, but God would make them manifest quickly, and they would be purged out from among Israel. I saw that the above named errors of Bates and others had brought confusion and had destroyed James' confidence in Bro. Bates; I saw that James at first had gadly jealousy for the truth, then other jealousy crept in until he was jealous of most every move Bro. Bates would make. These wrongs I saw must be taken out of the way. Then I saw Bro. Bates, said the angel, be not quick to receive error, nor too slow to receive the truth. I saw that the woman of Rev. xiv. 4 meant the churches, and that we were bid to "come out of her" that we be not defiled "partake of her sins" and receive her plagues. I saw that Bro. Bates had not applied Rev. xiv. 4 correctly, and his error had caused confusion. Then I saw that after Jesus leaves the Sanctuary, the plagues will be poured out. Said the angel—It is the wrath of God and the Lamb, that causes the destruction or the death of the wicked. I saw that of the voice of God the saints will be mighty and terrible as an army with banners; but they will not then execute the judgment written.*

But after they are changed in a moment in the twinkling of an eye and caught up with the sleeping saints, and receive their harps, crowns & c. and enter the city, Jesus and his saints sit in judgment the books are opened, the book of life and the book of death. The book of life contains the good deeds of the saints, and the book of death contains the evil deeds of the wicked. These books were compared with

the statute book, the Bible, and according to that, they were judged. The saints in unison with Jesus passed their judgment upon the wicked dead. Behold ye, said the angel, the saints sit in unison with Jesus and mete out to each of the wicked according to the deeds done in the body, and it is set off against their name: what they must receive at the execution of the judgment. This I saw was the work of the saints with Jesus through the 1000 years. At the end of the 1000 years Jesus with the holy angels and all the saints leave the city, and while he is descending with them, the wicked dead are raised, and then the very men that pierced him will see him afar off in all his glory, and all the holy angels, and the saints with him. They will see the prints of the nails in his hands and in his feet, and where they thrust the spear into his side, and they will wail because of him. I saw that the prints of the nails and of the spear were his glory. Then it is that Jesus stands upon the Mount of Olives and the Mount parts a sunder and becomes a plain, and the city comes down from God out of heaven and settles on the plain. Then satan imbues the wicked that they have been raised with his spirit and he flatters them that the army in the city is small and that his army is large and that they can overcome them and take the city. While satan is rallying his army the saints are in the city beholding the beauty and glory of the paradise of God. Jesus was at their head leading them. All at once the lovely Jesus was gone from our company, but soon we heard his lovely voice saying, come ye blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. We gathered about Jesus and just as he closed the gates of the city, the curse of God was pronounced upon the wicked. The gates are shut. Then the saints use their wings and fly to the top of the wall of the city. Jesus is also with them. His crown looked brilliant and glorious. It was a crown within a crown, seven in number. The crowns of the saints were of the purest gold, and were decked with stars and shone like the sun, as they moved all together to the top of the city. Their faces shone with glory, for they were in the express image of Jesus. Then the wicked saw that they had lost. And fire was breathed from God upon them and consumed them. Then was the execution of the judgment. The wicked received according as the saints in unison with Jesus had meted out to them through the 1000 years. The same fire from God that consumed the wicked purified the earth. The mountains melted with fervent heat. The atmosphere also and all the stubble was consumed.

Then our inheritance opened before us glorious and beautiful. Then we inherited the whole earth made new. We shouted with a loud voice, Glory! Allelujah! *Then I saw that God had not given Bro. Bates the gift of discernment; but his gift was to talk the word.* None had a gift like his. He could talk to a small company when there was no more than two present as well as to a large company. This gift is greatly needed in the church. *I saw that he had prepared the way in many places for the Lord to speak through visions. The angel then pointed to Bro. Bates and said, be careful how thou treadest, lest the flock be torn.* Draw near to God, thou hast been in danger. Can ye not see it. That must be healed every whit. This people must be humble. *I begged Jesus to forbid that there should any discord among the shepherds, for then the flock would be scattered as sheep without shepherd.* I prayed Jesus to encircle them now in his lovely arms. I saw that *the disunion between the shepherds had affected the flock.* Then I saw that in scattering time when paper after paper was dying, Bro. Bates wrote for them until the last, and now in the gathering time when precious souls, that have been hid beneath the rubbish, and have not had the

privilege of hearing the truth, need light from different ones, his testimony has been withheld. I saw that if ever the saints could be benefited by comforting words, and the truth made clear in the paper, it is *now* in the gathering. God wanted the paper to cease in the scattering time.<sup>41</sup> But now the truth should be sung, preached, prayed, and published. Then I saw we must drink, deep, deep, from the water of the fountain. Said the angel, ye must reflect the lovely image of Jesus more and more. I saw that we were almost home, to rest in the city 1000 years. Said the angel, ye must love one another as Jesus hath loved you. I saw that Bro. Bates must be open, ready to yield up a deer point when the clear light shines. I saw that we must be more like Jesus. Everything in heaven is in perfect order. *Then I saw James and Bro. Bates*; said the angel, press together, press together, ye shepherds lest the sheep be scattered.<sup>42</sup> Love one another as I have loved you. *Swim, swim, swim, plunge deep, deep in the ocean of God's love.* Come into a nearness with God. I saw that we must overcome perfectly and get the victory over the powers of darkness. *I saw that Bro. Bates* with the other shepherds should consult those in whom they have reason to have confidence, and who have been in all the messages, and are firm in all the present truth, and have not wavered upon it, before they receive and advocate any point of importance which they think the Bible sustains.<sup>43</sup>

Then I saw that all the shepherds would be perfectly *united* and *that* <sup>43a</sup> union the church would feel, and the shepherds would be strong, and each one would know just what work the other was doing, and thereby they could hold up reach other's hands, and the church would be benefited and then there would be little danger of any of the shepherds receiving dangerous error with which to divide the precious flock. E. G. White.<sup>44</sup>

At this junction it is appropriate to draw some conclusions as to the value of the handwritten Hiram Edson version of the Ellen G. White visions in 1850. Are these alternatives genuine or the best preserved versions of those visions, or are they unreliable twisted apocrypha? There are several possibilities to test this material. In the first place the reader may wonder who Hiram Edson was. All Adventist specialists or historians know that Edson was a very devoted pioneer who sacrificed a great deal to the unorganized Sabbatarian group.<sup>45</sup> It is true that he was no lucid writer himself, but expressed his thoughts somewhat incoherently.<sup>46</sup> This evaluation, however, does not detract from his possibilities to take down a faithful rendering of an EGW vision he had heard in person, or received from the prophetic in handwritten form. No official from the SDA Church has so far to my knowledge questioned Edson's integrity.

Those remarks, important as they are, however, do not per se prove much as to the value of the Fisel texts or that in the Percy T. Magan collection. The reader has certainly already discovered the *striking* similarities between the Hiram Edson version and the visions printed in the acknowledged texts. Line after line are identical, almost in the smallest detail. There are stylistic differences and the original Edson text abounds

in spelling mistakes, but the contents and vocabulary are definitely those of the early Ellen G. White. Dr. Fisel has demonstrated how passages after passages from the Edson material are repeated in the *Early Writings*.<sup>47</sup> Moreover, Fisel has shown how *several* characteristic terms, *idiomatic EGW vocabulary*, occur in the Edson text.<sup>48</sup> Those arguments are simply facts, not easily gainsaid. After all it is up to the critics to prove that Fisel is wrong here. There is not a shadow of a doubt about it: the reproduced Edson text reveals the original visionary as she actually was!

This writer has made several observations as to this material to show how this Edson material, instead of being apocryphal, as some official SDA writers claim, since this material has never been included among the official EGW documents, it is, indeed, the most genuine and true documents undefiled from the source so to speak. It is my conclusion that the Edson text in fact is most dependable text extant from the shut door years. The Edson version is more dependable than the early printed versions in the Present Truth, 1849—1850.

The omissions seem to have been made on two major grounds: 1) the many personal reprimands, esp. concerning the famous pioneer, Joseph Bates, were deleted in the official versions, in the *Present Truth* et cetera, 2) teachings referring to shut-door, rebaptism “in the faith of the shut door and keeping the commandments of God.”<sup>49</sup> Besides the childish concept of a literal scapegoat in heaven upon which Jesus places the terrible burden of sin<sup>50</sup> could not be reproduced in the subsequent EGW writings. Everybody could understand that decision from the side of James White. And there are other passages that had to be omitted, such as the idea of the death “decree” to proceed from the dragon mouth of the “two horned beast,” as EGW interpreted the text in Rev. 13.<sup>51</sup>

We shall now give some very important evidences to show how the versions of the same vision changed under different circumstances, and how common the Edson type of version was, when compared with other *contemporary* EGW visions. In November, 1850, EGW gave “a short sketch” of what the Lord had “recently shown” her in vision.<sup>52</sup> From the very beginning of the published edition she echoed the *Sutton Vision*, as Edson reported it.<sup>53</sup> The first omission occurs, when EGW came to the point of criticising Elder Bates. His name is becomingly deleted. The revised form has this rendering: “I saw that the message “sell that ye have and give alms” had not been given, *by some*, in its clear light.” EGW, in this *revised* text also omitted the allusion that Bates by his wrong use of the biblical phrase, according to her view, had encouraged some adherents to “hold on to” their property.<sup>54</sup> No mention at all is made of the New York

"general conference" in the revised text. In the following two paragraphs of the revised version, EGW upbraided those who prayed "for the sick . . . before unbelievers."<sup>55</sup> The same concept is stressed in the original Edson version, but there EGW rebuked Bates for partaking of "the communion among unbelievers" and for washing the saints' feet in that company.<sup>56</sup> The problem is that we do not exactly know what EGW had in mind with the term "unbelievers." It could possibly refer to non-confessing people, but more likely to non-Sabbatarian Adventists. Evidently EGW advocated a *closed* communion at that time.<sup>57</sup>

The original version has a clue to the vision, which is lacking in the revised form, for in Edson's text we read about a tense situation between "James" and Elder Bates. The prophetess has been shown that her husband had become a victim of *jaalousie* of Joseph Bates to the degree, that "he was jealous of most every move Bro. Bates would make."<sup>58</sup> In the same passage in the original Edson text, EGW explained how Bates was wrong in his interpretation of Rev. 14:4.<sup>59</sup> That part is also omitted in the *revised* text, as is another reprimand to "Bates with the other shepherds."<sup>60</sup> The revised text merely exhorts the leaders to consult in matters of theology "those in whom they have reason to have confidence."<sup>61</sup> This passage is rewritten in more general terms in order to fit in with the more polite tone in a journal.

The last part of printed EGW version was taken from another document, the so called *Dorchester Vision* of September or October 23, 1850.<sup>62</sup> Deliberately EGW omitted every reference in this version to "the house of Bro. Nichols in Dorchester, Mass." where she received the vision.<sup>63</sup> Evidently the main burden of that addition was to impress upon the "bands" the importance of being united in their understanding of Dan. 8:12—14—Miller's key text—and not yield to reinterpretations as they emerged among Miller's former adherents. There was also a word of caution in reference to new *termini* for the parousia. The EGW text ends up with a specific warning to those who were tempted to settle in Jerusalem, to await the parousia there together with converted Jews.<sup>64</sup> And, indeed, EGW had some ground for including this caveat. For in the same year none less than Hiram Edson expected this event to happen and had printed a pamphlet explaining his Age-to-Come views.<sup>65</sup> The middle part of the *Present Truth* version was reprinted with substantial omissions in "Experience and Views," a booklet amounting to 64 pages.<sup>66</sup>

Consequently we find no less than three steps in the development of the EGW text: 1) the handwritten Edson version, 2) the strikingly different *Present Truth* edition, and 3) the revised "standard" text in "*Experience*

and Views" from 1851. Only the Edson text is original. These observations are of the greatest importance, when we presently take up the discussion of EGW and Shut Door.

When this writer did extensive research in early Adventist history at the vaults in the Ellen G. White Estate, he found that it was a characteristic feature in the EGW letters from this period to include visions and direct "messages" to various individuals. The part that suggests that "singing to the glory of God drove the enemy and shouting would beat him back and give us the victory," is repeated almost exactly in EGW's letter to Sister Arabella in 1850.<sup>67</sup> The early EGW visions resemble the views of other typical millenarian prophets, in making her own visions a *conditio sine qua non* for those parties involved. To accept the message meant salvation, to reject it spelled spiritual ruin. More often than not her husband, James White, stood in the center of those personal communiques that indicated that he should be supported as editor and leader of the emerging Sabbatarian movement.<sup>68</sup>

In the *Oswego Vision* EGW suggests the excommunication of a certain Bro. Gorsline, a "stubborn and rebellious" brother, who "had wounded and torn the hearts of God's people."<sup>69</sup> Such messages were not unusual during EGW's entire ministry<sup>70</sup> and were looked upon as a token of her divine inspiration to be able to read the hearts of men.

It remains to examine our important assignment: EGW and Shut Door.

### 3. The Visions Support Shut Door

As has been demonstrated above<sup>71</sup> belief in the salvation-historical importance of the October date, and concept of the end of salvation for the "world" and the churches that rejected the significance of this, became the main pillar of the radical minority groups in Miller's shattered movement. For this reason they called themselves believers in Shut Door and the October 22 date. Somewhat later, in 1846, the group around James and Ellen Harmon-White added another "landmark" to their beliefs: the Seventh-day Sabbath. Knowing this as an undisputed fact, it would, indeed, be most surprising, if the young prophetess should have taught anything else.

The oldest extant *published* report in reference to EGW's shut-door concept appeared early in January 1846.<sup>72</sup> The main thrust of this printed vision was to defend Snow's and Miller's October time movement as a revival guided by Heaven. Those who for some reason repudiated the

October time as God's final message to mankind, could not be saved, but would be condemned to share the dismal fate of "all the wicked world which God had *rejected*."<sup>73</sup> Those Christians were not even given a second chance to repent, if we shall believe the original text. Wrote Ellen Harmon: "Others rashly denied the light behind them (Snow's October date, called the Midnight Cry)<sup>74</sup> and said that it was not God who had led them out so far. The light behind them went out leaving their feet in perfect darkness, and they stumbled and got their eyes off the mark and lost sight of Jesus, and fell off the path down in the dark and wicked world below. It was just as impossible for them to get on the path again and go to the City as all the wicked world which God had rejected."<sup>75</sup> These settings make a lucid and straightforward confession of the radical shut-door notion. In the same text EGW also underscored another favorite view among Miller's "left," namely that in a short little while God himself would proclaim the exact "day and hour of Jesus' coming."<sup>76</sup> As has been shown above the Whites had received this unorthodox view from Snow's Midnight Cry journal.<sup>77</sup>

Ellen Harmon-White's second contribution to Shut Door appeared in April 1846.<sup>78</sup> In this cheap "broadside" there were two visions, the first December 1844 vision, and a synopsis of a vision she had had in February 1845.<sup>79</sup> The very setting of this February vision is illuminating to note. For from other EGW reports<sup>80</sup> we get the information that she got this vision at a cottage meeting with Millerite adventists at the house of Elder Israel Dammon, Exeter, Maine.<sup>81</sup> This shut-door radical was much feared among the "moderate" Millerites, to the extent that they published a special note of warning against the man in the leading "open-door" journal. It said in substance: "It has become necessary to warn the brethren everywhere against Israel Dammon, and John Moody, two married men, and Miss Dorinda Baker, who are travelling in company to various places, teaching disgusting extravagances. . . . This Mr. Dammon is the one whose *trial* in Maine has been reported in all papers. We repudiate all these notions of public feet-washings, embracings, kissings etc. etc."<sup>82</sup>

Even the Day-Star, which was a very outspoken shut-door paper drew the line for Dammon and admitted that he "was crazy, for everybody said so."<sup>83</sup>

What attitude did Ellen Harmon show for this man then? The fact that she had a vision in his house and took part in meeting there, would, of course, not be defamatory *per se*, if one can prove that she went there to *counteract* his influence. But was that so? In the first place we know what feelings young EGW entertained for Dammon, and in the second place

we also know the contents of that vision. In the oldest sketch of her life EGW considered Dammon so important that she devoted considerable space to praising this shut-door "charismatic," or most probably also a visionary. She remarked: "From Exeter we went to Atkinson. One night I was shown something that I did not understand. It was to this effect, that we were to have a *trial of our faith*. The next day, which was the first day of the week,<sup>84</sup> while I was speaking, two men looked into the window. We were satisfied of their object. They entered and rushed past me to Elder Damman.<sup>85</sup> *The Spirit of the Lord* rested upon him, and his strength was taken away, and he fell to the floor helpless. The officer cried out, 'In the name of the State of Maine, lay hold of his man.' Two seized his arms, and two his feet, and attempted to drag him from the room. They would move him a few inches only, *and then rush him out of the house. The power of God was in that room*, and the servants of God lighted up with his glory, made no resistance."<sup>86</sup>

EGW went on to tell her readers how no less than twelve men tried to get Dammon out of the room, but were helpless for forty minutes during which time Dammon "was held by the power of God." Then Dammon got out of this cataleptic state, and as soon as that happened, "those men took him up as easily as they would take up a child, and carried him out."<sup>87</sup>

As to Dammon's trial EGW reports how nobody would guard him prior to the trial, when Dammon "was singing, and praying, and praising the Lord all night." Dammon was tried on the ground that "he was a disturber of the peace," and was accused for having a "spiritual wife." He had to pay for court proceedings, and was then released, according to EGW's account.<sup>88</sup>

Fortunately we know more about this cottage meeting at "Elder" Dammon's house. An incomplete EGW letter to the famous Sabbath apostle, Joseph Bates, completes the narrative. This handwritten genuine EGW letter, in fact the oldest extant EGW letter, was discovered by this writer in the vaults of the Ellen G. White Estate in 1967.<sup>89</sup> In this important document EGW explains how it came about that she became a shut-door believer. Bates, to be sure, knew this before, but was not sure as to the influence of Joseph Turner's *Advent Mirror* presentation, as one can gather from this letter.<sup>90</sup> Consequently EGW explains the entire situation as she wanted him to understand it. Now EGW was eager to relate to Bates what happened at that important gathering. From the letter we get almost an impressionistic view of the charismatic millenarian milieu. At that early period, in February 1845, the Millerites were disconcerted and divided in their opinions. Among the more primitive groups local visio-

naries and laymen leaders exerted a great influence.<sup>91</sup> EGW had a great respect for a certain Sister Durben, a "Mother in Israel" who had been an active lady preacher for 20 years. From the letter one can clearly sense how inferiority feelings plagued the young visionary. "I was young and I thought they would not receive it from me. I disobeyed the Lord and insisted of (sic) remaining at home."<sup>92</sup>

About the most critical point, her relation to Turner, she gives a lengthy narrative to the meaning that she and Turner were close friends, belonging to the same shut-door group.<sup>93</sup> Moreover she admitted that the Harmons had a copy of *The Advent Mirror*, but she did not even look at it, as she was "very sick." Reading injured her head and made her "nervous."<sup>94</sup> Still more perplexed must Bates have become when he read about her explanation of her view about the Coming of the "bridegroom," compared with Turner's journal. EGW reports: "The view about the bridegroom's coming I had about the middle of February 1845 while in Exeter Maine in meeting with Israel Dammon James & many others. Many of them did not believe in shut door I suffered much at the commencement of the meeting, unbelief seemed to be on every hand, their was a sister their that was called very spiritual . . . she had been truly a mother in Israel."<sup>95</sup>

Then EGW goes on to inform Bates how there had arisen a division "on the shut door" in the band; this influential Sister Durben being one who did not believe the door was shut. In the most dramatic part of the letter EGW is informing Bates about a vision she received in Dammon's house, the result of which was that "most of them received the vision was settled upon *the* shut door."<sup>96</sup> Sister Durben, the much feared *open*-door preacher also "fell to the floor"—like Israel Dammon would do—and when Ellen Harmon came out of her vision she could hear Sister Durben's "singing and shouting with a loud voice," convinced about the shut-door view.<sup>97</sup>

We have received first-hand information from the prophetess herself how she related to the crucial shut-door teaching. It goes without saying that Bates received information in no uncertain terms as to how EGW related to Turner's and Hale's epoch-making presentation of the "Coming of the Bridegroom," or Christ going into the Most Holy Place to receive the kingdom on that fatal October day. EGW tries the impossible explanation of accepting the *Advent Mirror* theology and deny any influence from that paper. Such explanations could only be bought by those who never questioned anything in the early visions. There is of course no logic in EGW's explanations to admit the striking similarity between her shut-door view and that of Turner, even admitting how the paper was in her home, but then state that the contents of that article was unknown to her.

For even if we make generous allowances for her weak condition, she moved in the house and had certainly *ears* to listen at the lively discussions in those circles, and when she went to Dammon's place in February 1845, she had already a clear understanding about the divisions "in the band."

The main contents of her February vision about the Coming of the Bridegroom were published in the "broadside," *To the little Remnant Scattered Abroad*.<sup>98</sup> In the printed version she reports about the events in heaven after October 22, 1844. She sees a "little praying company" bowed down before the divine throne, and another great, but careless company contrasting the little intelligent praying group. The vision was said to reflect the fate of three groups: the Advent people, the church, and the world.<sup>99</sup>

In the middle of the vision Ellen Harmon reported how she was present in heaven in a vision to observe how God's throne was *moved* from the Holy to the Most Holy Place on that fatal October day. She writes: "And I saw the Father rise from the throne, and in a flaming charriot go into the Holiest of Holies, within the veil, and did sit. There I saw thrones that I had never seen before. Then Jesus rose up from the throne, and the most of them who were bowed down arose with Him: *and I did not see one ray of light pass from Jesus to the careless multitude after he arose, and they were left in perfect darkness.*"<sup>100</sup>

As there was light in the land of Goshen, when the heavy darkness of perfect night fell upon the Egyptians in Moses' time, so the "careless" churches and open-door adventists were left in the night of condemnation on October 22, whereas the "Little Flock" of shut-door believers were enshrouded in heavenly light. In the heart of the vision Ellen Harmon echoes a central setting from Turner's exposition. We read: "Then He raised His right arm and we heard his lovely voice saying, Wait here—I am going to my Father to receive the Kingdom; keep your garments spotless, and *in a little while I will return from the wedding* and receive you to myself."<sup>101</sup>

At the end of the narrative Ellen Harmon once more described the hopeless state of the "company" who did not know that Jesus had for ever left the Holy Place in the heavenly sanctuary. About their fate Ellen Harmon commented: "Then I turned to look at the company who were still bowed before the throne (in the Holy Place, which Ellen Harmon contended that Christ had left on October 22). They did not know that Jesus had left it—i.e., the first apartment or the Holy Place—Satan appeared to be by the throne, trying to carry on the work of God; I saw them look up to the throne and pray, my Father give us thy Spirit; then Satan

would breathe upon them an unholy influence; in it there was light and much power, but no sweet love, joy and peace. Satan's object was to keep them deceived, and drew back and deceive God's children."<sup>102</sup> Such remarks certainly reflect the vehement party spirit among the competing adventist groups after the disappointment. It is perhaps worth mentioning that EGW had to explain this view of Satan in heaven as it were in a "supplement," added in 1854<sup>103</sup>

Nowhere in this concise February vision do we detect the ominous term, "shut-door." Some of the foremost Adventist apologists have drawn unwarranted conclusions from this fact, maintaining that Shut Door notions never occurred in this vision.<sup>104</sup> The facts are far different, however. This early text, as well as the first vision, is imbedded in shut-door ideas. Ellen Harmon gilded Snow's and Turner's explanations and made them the basic elements in her visions. Those who accepted the salvation-historical importance of the October events qualified as the only true remnant which had followed Christ and God the Father from the Holy to the Most Holy Place. The rest of the religious world became victims of Satan and were deceived with his spirit. Accordingly, the February vision is no less permeated with the shut-door theology than the first vision. Needless to say this vision reflected the world view of the shut-door Millerites; orthodox Christians had never held the view that Christ ministered in the first "apartment" of the sanctuary until 1844. They had taken it for granted as the author of Hebrews teaches that Christ had been in the Most Holy Place, at the right side of God's throne, since His ascension.

In 1847, when most shut-door adherents in the Sunday-keeping groups had given up the original shut-door theology, EGW and the Sabbatarian shut-door people were strong as ever before in that radical view, advocating both the salvation-historical importance of the October date and the drastic limitation as to salvation for the majority of Christians, who repudiated this view. In a letter to Eli Curtis, New York City, EGW outlined her apocalyptic views, in sharp contrast to some of his ideas.<sup>105</sup> Whereas Curtis taught that "professed Adventists" eventually would be saved. EGW maintained that they were "forever lost," since they had "crucified to themselves the Son of God afresh, . . ."<sup>106</sup> The difference of opinion is easy to explain, when we know that Eli Curtis gave up his radical shut-door view long before EGW.<sup>107</sup> In her letter to Curtis EGW went on to say that she had seen "in vision, that Jesus rose up, and *shut the door*, and entered the Holy of Holies, at the 7th month 1844."<sup>108</sup> In perfect harmony with her shut-door theology EGW could state that "professed Adventists," or "open-door" adventists, were "forever lost."

In the same year James White explained EGW's way to the shut-door view after the Great Disappointment.<sup>109</sup> In an effort to counteract rational reasoning as to her visions, he made the following observations: "However true this extract may be in relation to reveries, it is *not* true in regard to the visions: for the author *does not* 'obtain the sentiments of her visions' from previous teaching or study." When she received her first vision, Dec. 1844, she and all the band in Portland, Maine, (where her parents then resided) had given up the midnight-cry, and shut door, as being in the past."<sup>110</sup> Accordingly, James White wanted to prove that like many other Millerites, Ellen Harmon and her parents repudiated their former convictions in reference to the October date. There were therefore no rational grounds at hand for her shut-door view, but divine illumination in visions. The first vision of December 1844 meant a radical change in her understanding and in this way Ellen Harmon became a shut-door believer, he argued.

The following paragraph is also important, as it shows how vital the shut-door view was regarding the absolute validity of the October date and the concept of the drastic limitations in their mission activity to the participants in Miller's movement. White goes on to say: "It was then that the Lord shew her in vision, the error into which she has and the band in Portland had fallen. She then related her vision to the band, and about sixty confessed their error, and acknowledged their 7th month experience to be the work of God."<sup>111</sup> It so happened that a formal confession to 1844 and its implications was required in every member of the Sabbatarian shut-door group. James White's statement is in agreement with EGW's own report to Bates in the same year.<sup>112</sup> It is implied in this statement by James White that there was perfect agreement between the consorts as to Shut Door.

Another early letter by a loyal believer in EGW's visions, Otis Nichols, a resident of Dorchester, Mass., where EGW had visions, confirms the statement of the Whites in reference to the meaning of Shut Door. Aglow with inspiration to convince Father Miller about Ellen Harmon's divine calling as a kind of Messaiah, he sent him the broadside, *To the Little Remnant Scattered Abroad*.<sup>113</sup> At the back of the material Nichols explained how Ellen Harmon related to the October events. Nichols wrote: "... she continued to travel day and night talking almost every day, until she had visited most of the advent bands in Maine and the easterly parts of New Hampshire. Her message was always attended with the Holy Ghost, and wherever it was received as from the Lord it broke down and united their hearts like little children, fed, comforted, strengthened the

weak and encouraged them *to hold on to the faith, and the 7th movement, and that our work was done for the nominal church and the world, and what remains to be done was for the household of faith.*"<sup>14</sup>

Nichols' letter confirms the previous contemporary reports that EGW in her visions and works held on to Shut Door in its original radical meaning. Like Joseph Bates and others, the Whites, too, had "closed up" their work for the world and the churches since October 22, 1844. While the Bridegroom was making himself ready for the "marriage," the faithful remnant could only trim their lamps, or perfect their own characters.

In 1849 and 1850 EGW penned additional articles, explaining her position regarding Shut Door. In the summer of 1849 James White launched the first Sabbatarian Journal, the *Present Truth*. What was more appropriate than having the prophetess write some articles there as to visions she had received? Her first contribution was a revelation she had on March 24th 1849, together with friends at Topsham, Maine.<sup>15</sup> Already in the introduction EGW testified to the importance of Shut Door. We read: "The Holy Ghost was poured out upon us, and I was taken off in the Spirit to the City of the living God. There I was shown that the commandments of God, and the testimony of Jesus Christ,"<sup>16</sup> relating to the shut door, could not be separated, . . ."<sup>17</sup> In this installment EGW tried to emphasize how October 22 also meant a line of demarcation as regards Sabbath-keeping. Before that time the Seventh-day Sabbath had not been of any consequence to the remnant, but after 1844 God expected his faithful few to observe the "biblical Sabbath." EGW continued: "This door (into the Most Holy Place) was not opened, until the mediation of Jesus was *finished* in the Holy Place of the Sanctuary in 1844. Then, Jesus rose up, and shut the door in the Holy Place, and opened the door in the Most Holy, and passed within the second vail, where he now stands by the Ark; and where the faith of Israel now reaches."<sup>18</sup>

It is important to observe the key words in this quotation. In the first place EGW speaks of the *end* of Christ's mediation in the so called Holy Place, or the first apartment of the heavenly sanctuary. This means that the Gospel dispensation had *ended* for ever. This was why the open-door adventists were lost and received an effusion of devilish spirit, when they got lost as to the "heavenly geography." Second, the term "Israel" here does not refer to any Jews, but to the Shut-door Sabbatarians, who "are being tested on the Sabbath question."<sup>19</sup>

As is characteristic in millenarian prophets<sup>20</sup> and in young EGW, she used a drastic language and knew how to draw the sharp lines between the Kingdom of God and that of the Archfiend. Like the primitive Meth-

odists, or other Evangelicals of the genuine revival style, EGW, too, believed in bodily manifestations, such as falling prostrate to the floor as a sign of the working of the Holy Spirit.<sup>121</sup> But how could the Sabbatarian shut-door friends know, when the falling was a genuine case? She had an answer to the perplexing problem: "I saw that Satan was working through agents, in a number of ways. He was at work through ministers, who have rejected the truth, and are given over to strong delusions to believe a lie that they might be damned."<sup>122</sup> While they were preaching, or praying some would fall prostrate and helpless; not by the power of the Holy Ghost, no, no; but by the power of Satan breathed upon these agents through them to the people. Some professed Adventists who had rejected the *present truth*,<sup>123</sup> while preaching, praying or in conversation used *Mesmerism* to gain adherents, and the people would rejoice in this influence, for they thought it was the Holy Ghost."<sup>124</sup>

In particular EGW wanted to warn the Little Flock of Sabbatarian shut-door believers for this sophisticated "delusion."<sup>125</sup> At the end of this printed text there is a passage which was omitted in the subsequent editions. In that deleted part the prophetess exposed the reformations in other churches, most likely mainly among the open-door adventists. She explained: "I saw that the mysterious signs and wonders, and false reformations would increase, and spread. The reformations that were shown me, were not reformations from error to truth; *but from bad to worse*; for those who professed a change of heart, had only wrapped about them a religious garb, which covered up the iniquity of a wicked heart. Some appeared to have been really converted, so as to deceive God's people;<sup>126</sup> but if their hearts could be seen, they would appear as black as ever.

My accompanying angel bade me to look for the travel (sic) of soul for sinners as used to be, I looked, but could not see it: for *the time for their salvation is past*."<sup>127</sup>

In such drastic words Shut Door was used as a vehicle for a radical separation between "God's people" and the fallen churches, where the Devil had got the control, since the decisive October date.

In December 1849 EGW had had a vision about a discouraged pioneer preacher, Bro. Rhodes, in which she appealed to another shut-door Brother, Hiram Edson, to visit Rhodes and try to win him back to the cause as an active missionary among the Little Flock.<sup>128</sup> At the end of that vision EGW inserted a kind of commendation in remarking that "there had been no guile in speaking against the present truth, relating to the Sabbath, and Shut Door" in Bro. Rhodes' case.<sup>129</sup> Likewise in 1849 EGW could inspire her close friends, the Hastings, with the report that Brother

Stowell “was established *in the shut door* and in all the present truth he had doubted.”<sup>130</sup>

The end of 1849 and the beginning of 1850 were marked by a strong renewal of shut-door articles in the *Present Truth*.<sup>131</sup> In the wake of David Arnold’s outspoken expositions, telling the world about the end of salvation “for the Gentile world,” and how Christ had “withdrawn himself” from the churches with their professed spurious conversions,<sup>132</sup> followed a succinct report from EGW. It is really worth observing how the prophetess employs almost the same words in her vision as David Arnold. Wrote EGW: “The excitements and false reformation of this day do not move us, for we know that the Master of the house rose up in 1844, and *shut the door* of the first apartment of the heavenly tabernacle; and now we certainly expect that they will “go with their flocks,” to seek the Lord; but they shall not find him; he hath withdrawn himself (within the second veil) from them. The Lord has shown me that the power which is with them is a mere human influence, and not the power of God.”<sup>133</sup>

In this manner EGW went on with her previous shut-door teaching and *confirmed* the views of her brethren. In fact she moved in the midstream of Millerite shut-door theology from the beginning of her career as a visionary. Side by side with this radical shut-door theology went its bed-fellow, belief in an imminent parousia. Although EGW refrained from stating any definite time for that event, she repeated that the time was “nearly finished.”<sup>134</sup> The “scattering time” had ended and now in 1850 they were in the “gathering time.”<sup>135</sup> At that junction EGW pressed upon her husband renewed recommendations to reprint old Adventist articles from the time the Millerites were united in their understanding of October 1844 as a decisive date in God’s dealings with man. In those articles there were also strong statements by J. B. Cook and others in reference to Shut Door.<sup>136</sup>

As late as 1850 EGW had new visions supporting the genuine shut-door view. She did not hesitate to request a kind of baptism into this shut-door theology. We read in the original text of the *Oswego Vision*: “Said the Angel, can ye stand in the battle of the day of the Lord? You need to be washed and live in newness of life. Then I saw those whose hands are now engaged in making up the breach and are standing in the gaps, that have formerly since ’44 broken the Commandments of God and have so far followed the pope as to keep the first day instead of the seventh, would have to go into the water and be baptized *in the faith of the shut door* and keeping of the commandments of God . . . all who have not been baptized since ’44 will have to be baptized before Jesus comes and some will not

gain progress now until that *duty* is done.”<sup>137</sup>

More than five years after the Disappointment, however, the Shut-Door Sabbatarians gradually noticed how a few people outside their own circles began to inquire for their beliefs. Some became interested and requested baptism. In this way only did the hard-core shut-door believers at last sense their error as to a shut-door for the world and the churches. By degrees they began to open the “door” slightly to the world. This view can be documented in some of the writings among the Sabbatarian Adventists in the critical period, when they had to give up their tenacious exclusiveness, if they wanted to evangelize in the world.<sup>138</sup> This crisis became acute in 1851.

From our analysis of numerous EGW shut-door statements 1845–1850, it is clearly demonstrated that EGW did not formulate any shut-door philosophy of her own. On the contrary she underlined and confirmed the explanations en vogue in the shut-door circles. It all started with Snow and Turner. The October date both as a terminus of salvation-historical importance, the only “correct” end of Daniel’s 2300 “days,” and the definite end of the Gospel Age for the world, could be defined as Shut Door. Another alternative term for this view was the application of the True Midnight Cry on October 22 to use the language of the well-known parable in Mt. 25.

Snow’s and Turner’s shut-door concept would hardly have survived so long, but for the alternative exposition by O. R. L. Crosier, who for a very short time was a Sabbatarian shut-door brother. As soon as the Whites had studied his remarkable exposition, that expressed a medley of popular and fanciful millenarian ideas about the Millennium and the Age-To-Come views, not to speak of the incomplete atonement on the cross, EGW endorsed this exposition.<sup>139</sup> And so Crosier became another mentor for EGW. Likewise we have shown how David Arnold expressed his strict shut-door theology, based on Hos. 5:6–7.<sup>140</sup> Shut Door in its original twofold meaning survived Crosier’s article, or was even strengthened by it, but the important thing about that exposition came later, when the day had arrived at last to discard Shut Door in its salvation-limiting aspect.

Writers of a confessional or apologetical mind have always referred to the late EGW statements on her attitude to Shut Door, in addition to late secondary sources. Of contemporary documents from 1845–1851 there is to be sure very little that could be interpreted to show that EGW represented other views regard to Shut Door. After our comprehensive examination of the important contemporary items, no one can deny the impact and consensus of this genuine EGW material. Accordingly, any

not too lucid singular statement should be interpreted against this general tenor in EGW shut-door instruction. The most common so called “open-door” EGW statement during the period is said to be a phrase in her Sabbath vision, published by Joseph Bates in 1847.<sup>141</sup> In this short text EGW gives a synopsis of her view into the heavenly Most Holy Place and describes how she could check the accuracy in the wording of the Sabbath commandment. “The holy Sabbath looked glorious—a halo of glory was all around it,” she declared.<sup>142</sup> It goes without saying that this information cheered Bates, the famous Sabbath apostle, to the extent that he decided to print the vision.

In the same text the young prophetess added a definite warning for those who had once kept the Sabbath (on Saturday) and later given up that idea. Such individuals “would shut the gates of the Holy City against themselves as sure as there is a God that rules in heaven above,” she remarked.<sup>143</sup> And then follows this so called “open-door” statement: “I saw that God had children, *who do not see and keep the Sabbath*. They had not rejected the light on it. And at the commencement of the time of trouble, we were filled with the Holy Ghost as we went forth and proclaimed the Sabbath more fully. This enraged the church, and the nominal Adventists, as they could not refute the Sabbath truth. And at this time, God’s chosen all saw clearly that we had the truth, and they came out and endured the persecution with us.”<sup>144</sup>

When seen against its *apocalyptic* context, the time of trouble and the expected persecution from the side of Catholics and Protestants,<sup>145</sup> there is really nothing in this paragraph that invalidates the general EGW instruction on Shut Door. Right from the beginning the Shut-Door adventists, whether Sabbatarian or not, had believed that there was salvation for Millerites, provided they accepted the shut-door platform. To that the group around Joseph Bates, and the Whites and others added the Sabbath as another “landmark.” There is nothing in the text to show that EGW expected members in the established evangelical churches to become Shut-Door Sabbatharians; she merely mentions that “the church, and nominal Adventists “were enraged, as they could not refute the Sabbath truth.” Since EGW and all the rest in the Sabbatarian camp expected a very early parousia in 1847, it would be ridiculous to see a world-wide Seventh-day Adventist mission in this text. But many years later it became a general interpretation, also in EGW to give the original narrow vision such a facelift.<sup>146</sup>

#### 4. 1851 and the End of the Shut Door Period

Most Adventist writers, regardless of class, have agreed that in 1851 — 1852 a new era began in Sabbatarian Adventism.<sup>147</sup> In this short chapter we shall try to get down to the reasons for this major shift in Adventist theology and get hold on the problems involved in this transition from a shut to an open-door mission. In retrospect one easily notices the many aberrations from orthodoxy around 1850. In the previous year Bates had printed his “sealing pamphlet” in which he had stated that “a hundred forty-four thousand of the servants of God” would be sealed in 1849.<sup>148</sup> Likewise Hiram Edson had prophesied about the “final return of the Jews” in 1849.<sup>149</sup> The popular Age-to-Come theories had made deep inroads among some of the pioneers at this time, the principle promoter of those ideas being none less than the prestigious Crosier. With repeated declarations of the parousia the shut-door concept could be prolonged.

As to why the shut-door theology lost much of its appeal in 1851 is hard to say. Damsteegt construed a different end of Shut Door, in 1849, probably in order to make EGW exceptional and progressive in her missionary outlook.<sup>150</sup> The only weakness here is the glaring lack of support in the best primary documents. In the first place, however, it goes without saying that it must be considered far from commendable in the prophet to have stood by in silence so long, while the senior brethren were happy to proclaim a shut door to the world. Thus for several reasons Damsteegt might have felt unhappy with the late ending of the shut-door view.

Despite the efforts to adjust the *termini* of Shut Door, it is a fact that 1849 did not mean any noticeable alteration as to the important doctrine. On the contrary, a key person, such as James White, ordered the reprints of *old* shut-door articles in September 1850 with the old views all there for each one to study.<sup>151</sup>

Here we find a conspicuous inconsistency in Poehler. For most likely he was influenced by Damsteegt's reasoning as to the “evangelistic efforts” by the Whites shortly after 1849.<sup>152</sup> But in the same portion Poehler admits that James White adhered to his shut-door notion, until the summer of 1851, and he had not fully abandoned his unorthodox views even then.<sup>153</sup> Poehler explains this development as follows: “But there is surprisingly little evidence which would allow us to trace this development in great detail. In fact, the first sign which shows that a change had occurred in the thinking of the SDA pioneers can be found in the reprints by J. White (in the *RH* of August 1851 and January 1852) of some of his

earlier articles in which he inconspicuously omits and changes several of his former shut-door statements. It took him another month to publish his first article openly speaking of the need to work for “sinners.” (*RH* 17 February 1852).<sup>154</sup>

Poehler also attempts to give an explanation as to why James White was unwilling to give the full story in regard to this major shift in doctrine. J. White thought it wise “to do so in the *RH* which served as the missionary paper,” unless it might have caused trouble among the dissenting hardcore shut-door brethren, “who were yet adhering to the old concept.” Nevertheless Poehler admits that this attitude was unwise in the long historical perspective, since it nurtured the view that the “pioneers were trying to cover up the mistakes of their past.”<sup>155</sup> But as we shall see there were different and more important grounds for the many reservations as to the new theology. The most difficult thing in the whole problem was EGW’s support of Shut Door for all those years. How could a prophet teach heresy, and still be accepted as something next to absolute Truth? Accordingly, it remains to suggest some plausible motivations for the radical “open-door” theology, and, secondly, hows EGW managed to get out of those turmoils and remain a prophetess to Sabbatarian Adventists.

In the first place the critical years 1850–1851 seem to have been a period of transition from the old abortive shut-door notion to a cautious opening of the “door,” as we have noticed above.<sup>156</sup> It is typical of the lively prophetess that she was expressing this new development in exaggerated language. In a private letter to believers she stated: “Souls are coming out upon the truth all around here. They are those who have not heard the Advent doctrine (i.e. about the Shut Door and the Sabbath, including the sealing and the very imminent second coming) and some of them are those who went forth to meet the Bridegroom in 1844 . . .”<sup>157</sup> When we know that the total number of Sabbatarian Adventists amounted to merely some 3500 in 1863, it is obvious that the number of souls “coming out upon the truth all around” could not have been many in 1850. Most likely they were a handful. Nevertheless it was true that a kind of new start was showing on the Adventist horizon. But this was a very modest development. In a printed EGW vision only in January the previous year she had declared that time could “last but a very little longer.”<sup>158</sup> Joseph Bates work on the sealing to take place in 1849 was printed later in the same year. EGW’s vision might therefore very well have influenced Bates.<sup>159</sup> Beyond that date no adventist pioneer to our knowledge dared to suggest another *terminus* for the parousia. All things combined, the few new converts without any direct relation to Miller’s 1844 time movement,

and the Bates failure paved the way in a pragmatic way to convince the Whites about one important thing: the heterodox shut-door view could no longer be defended on any ground, and least so from Scripture. Very slowly, under much embarrassment and disgrace did the Whites decide that the "door" must still be open somehow.

It has been argued by many Adventist writers that the EGW visions led the group out of their shut-door delusions.<sup>160</sup> If this is so, the same writers must account for the fact that EGW through her visions supported and confirmed Shut Door in the first place. One can, moreover, argue with greater support from the documents that this EGW confirmation of the notion seems to render divine verification of the peculiar doctrine and so prolong this view beyond the point, where other shut-door brethren abandoned the same teaching. It is true that EGW in her visions emphatically underlined the salvation value of Sabbath keeping as a special test since October 22, 1844, but not previous to that date.<sup>161</sup> And the importance of this doctrine must be considered as the most important doctrinal component in the movement. But the same significance was given to the Sabbath by the other leaders in the emerging movement. Even Joseph Bates, the Sabbath apostle, spoke about a mission beyond Euphrates, and believed that the 144,000 thousand somehow would be sealed in 1849.<sup>162</sup> An examination of the contemporary EGW documents, whether in letters or in printed articles, shows that EGW shared the shut-door theology of her brethren senior to the bitter end.<sup>163</sup> Adventist writers of the apologetical stance tend to read into EGW many things that were never expressed in the visions.

Poehler correctly states that the end of the radical shut-door notion, in James White's case, basically of the Turnerian interpretation, can be seen from the omissions and alterations in previous shut-door articles.<sup>164</sup> A surprising thing in Poehler's essay, however, is very obvious here. For whereas he correctly concludes that omissions and alterations in James White's articles may be taken as dependable proof for a change in his shut-door theology, or for a shift from Shut Door to a kind of open-door theology,<sup>165</sup> he categorically denies this proof for EGW! Historians must not follow such biased and untenable reasoning. Of course, it takes no extraordinary amount of intelligence and reasoning capacity to see that what holds true for James White must out of necessity also apply to EGW.

Accordingly, the many omissions and alterations in the early EGW visions during the period 1845—1850, made in the 1851 *revised* edition of those views, show beyond any reasonable doubt that the Copernican revolution in shut-door theology took place in 1851—1852 and in the

same year they occurred in James White.

In the summer of 1851 the Whites had decided to publish the gist of the early EGW visions in a booklet. From several evidences we get the conclusion that for some reason EGW was having a difficult time at that junction. For one thing James White ruled that no visions were to be published in the regular church paper any longer. From this time the EGW visions would appear only in supplements to the *Review*.<sup>166</sup> But only *one* issue of visionary material materialized in the summer of 1851.<sup>167</sup> Arthur L. White maintains that the reason for this difficulty was the general opposition towards visions, much due to the Mormon activity.<sup>168</sup> This theory is hardly convincing, as the Mormons had been on the scene long before that time, and few of the Sabbatarian Adventists, or Adventists on the whole, cared much for Mormons. Finally, there is no ground for contending that the Mormons got less active in 1856, when EGW again began to publish her visions in the regular church paper.

In June 1967 this writer read an interesting unreleased EGW document which sheds some light on the problems the young prophetess was facing in the summer of 1851. In a letter to close friends she expressed her anxiety. "There is a stir all around here since the conference reports are being carried. (Evil of course.) Some are anxious to hear for themselves and will come to the meetings. *The visions trouble many. They (know) not what to make of them.* We shall have the visions published in pamphlet form and if all the particulars are not published in the pamphlet that I saw at Brother Cushman's and if you desire it I can write it out for you."<sup>169</sup> The letter was written on exactly the same day as the only issue of the *Review Extra* with EGW visions came off the press.

Thus, it is simply a fact that EGW was in a bad plight in the summer of 1851.<sup>170</sup> In this genuine letter, difficult to read due to faulty grammar, EGW was anxious to retain the confidence of the family. To that end she volunteered to write out the text of a certain vision, no longer extant today, by hand. From the wording of the letter it is established beyond all doubts that Joseph Smith certainly had nothing to do with this scepticism; there were matters in the EGW visions which even her best friends found hard to understand. The conference reports and some comments on her visions made many question her visions, she declared. Today there is no sure way of reconstructing every detail of this problem, if new EGW visions cannot be located from some quarters in New England.

But one thing we do know: the many omissions and changes in the early genuine EGW visions in the first published EGW book, called *Experience and Views* for short. The famous editor of the *Review and Herald* journal,

the late F. D. Nichol, made an account of the deletions in the 1851 booklet in his defense of EGW.<sup>171</sup> Those readers who want to study that report in detail had better consult that source. The most conspicuous omission of any was to be sure the well-known phrase in EGW first vision, "It was just as impossible for them (Millerites who rejected the validity of the October date) to get on the path again and go to the City, *as all the wicked world which God had rejected*."<sup>172</sup> Adventist apologists have devoted perhaps hundreds of pages in order to find a decent excuse for this omission. The only natural explanation is of course that once the Whites had rejected the old shut-door notion, they were anxious to get rid of the unscriptural views. In passing we might mention that Nichol suggested "honorable motives for (the) deletions," or deletions made "to avoid repetition."<sup>173</sup> The same writer also mentioned the poor economy of the pioneers as a ground for deletions. It was no doubt very true that the Whites were extremely poor in 1851, but then the question is still there, why just those deletions and not others? A few words more or less certainly did not mean much as to the printing bill.

A thorough examination of the 1851 deletions shows that the most conspicuous shut-door expressions, including those referring to the concept and not the term itself, were excluded. But try as he might, poor James White could not erase the setting and the spirit of those early shut-door visions. This is why there are still enough remnants from the unhappy epoch in the revised text. But the most obnoxious terms had been eradicated.

It would be incorrect to state that only the most obvious shut-door expressions were omitted in the revised edition. For in addition to that James White and his consort erased several other unfelicitous settings. This could refer to difficult to understand descriptions about the New Earth, where Apocrypha seems to have been the authority, and other untenable expressions. To mention one more thing, the editor(s) omitted the phrase were EGW in 1849 had claimed absolute authority for her visions and made them a *conditio sine qua non* for salvation.<sup>174</sup> Recent denominational writers have come up with a somewhat novel way of explanation for the omissions the 1851 text by maintaining that EGW made those changes, when the old terms no longer expressed her own interpretation of Shut Door.<sup>175</sup> But this explanation implies that she had supported a *different* view until that time. As in James White, the changes in the old versions reveal a change in theology in 1851.

Some writers find it hard to explain why James White was so reticent to confess this major change in theology about 1851. But why should he

go out openly and declare that from this time both he and his wife, who claimed to be a prophetess of God, had changed a fundamental belief? It is only human to refrain from admitting such mistakes and hope for the best in the future. James White did admit the shift of theology directly in lucid language only on *two* occasions in the *Review*, when opponents had been pressing him very hard on that point for some time.<sup>176</sup> As for his wife he boasted the *Sola Scriptura* principle for a time and mentioned that no writer in the paper had referred to the visions as an authority "on any point." And he added that "The Review has not for five years published *one* of them."<sup>177</sup> It should be mentioned, however, that White could not defend this policy very long in a church that had had a visionary from its beginning.

It is obvious, however, that EGW experienced a kind of literary exile or her silent years between 1851 — 1856.<sup>178</sup> And no less than three times did James White publish a statement that must have alluded to EGW and Shut Door. The statement read in a nutshell as follows: "... those on whom heaven bestows *the greatest blessings* are in the most danger of being 'exalted' and of falling, therefore, they need to be exhorted to be humble, and watched over carefully. *But how often have such been locked upon as almost infallible, and they themselves have been apt to drink in the extremely dangerous idea that all their impressions were the direct promptings of the Spirit of the Lord.*"<sup>179</sup>

Since the article was titled "Gifts of the Gospel Church," it would be incorrect to maintain that James White was discussing the heretical claims of Joseph Smith. Considering the extremely difficult passage for the group after 1851, it was only fitting to apply the warning to EGW and to those who had been looking upon her almost as a god. In a cautious manner James White now wanted to teach his church that only God and heaven are infallible. In harmony with this Protestant principle he therefore excluded any mention of the visions for five years, until the late autumn of 1855. But the difficulties with *two* authorities, the Bible and EGW as an inspired prophet were never solved.

The transition from the shut-door to the open-door position marked one of the most critical periods in the unorganized Sabbatarian movement. It is only fair to note how only James White's shrewd handling of the delicate matters saved EGW from a total failure. In this crisis we see the inherent consequences of the radical shut-door platform. The implications of that theology could be postponed for several years, but never avoided. Some critics have correctly suggested that although the Whites and others for ever gave up one heretical concept in reference to Shut

Door, the salvation-limiting idea, they nevertheless *retained* Shut Door in another manner in making Miller's Seventh Month movement and Snow's October time movement a new *conditio sine qua non* for salvation.<sup>180</sup> Those problems will be dealt with in a separate chapter. Basically this contention for the Whites seems to reflect the demands in denominational writers eager to find new ways for defending EGW's claims. Much more dependable than such suggestions is James White's own statement in 1852 that his group henceforth were of the "OPEN DOOR" theory.<sup>181</sup>

## CHAP. II Notes

1. Cf. Housel T. Jemison, *A Prophet Among You*. Mountain View, Calif. 1955, pp. 258—363. Arthur L. White, *The Ellen G. White Writings*, Wash. D.C. 1973, pp. 13—106.
2. Arthur L. White, op.cit. pp. 14—16. The *Testimonies*, a common term for the EGW writings.
3. Ibid. pp. 14, 21, 22, esp. p. 55, the title, pp. 63, 76 and so forth.
4. Ibid., pp. 55, 56. *Seventh-day Adventist Year Book*, 1977, Wash. D.C. p. 5, par. 1. *Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine*, Wash. D.C. 1957, pp. 89, 90.
5. Arthur L. White, op.cit. pp. 49—136.
6. Cf. *Spectrum*, Spring 1971, pp. 43—72. (Written by Elder W. Paul Bradley, chairman of the Ellen G. White Estate, Wash. D.C. as a rebuttal to articles in the *Spectrum*, Autumn 1970, pp. 57—68, and Autumn 1971, pp. 74—84.) *Great Controversy* is EGW's best known book on history, first published in 1858, finally heavily revised in 1888 and 1911.
7. Lindén, *The Last Trump*, Frankfurt/M. 1978, p. 147—149.
8. Ibid., p. 148.
9. Ibid., p. 149.
10. Ibid., p. 148.
11. Lindén, *The Last Trump*, Frankfurt/M. 1978, p. 150.
12. Ellen G. White, *Experience and Views*, South Bend 1916, pp. 21, 43, 59, 78, 79, 81—83. (Printed originally in Saratoga Springs, N.Y. 1851.) J.F.C. Harrison, *The Second Coming*. Popular Millenarianism 1780—1850. London 1979, pp. 39—54.
13. Lindén, *The Last Trump*, Frankfurt/M. 1978, pp. 144—146.
14. Ibid., p. 151.
15. Ibid., p. 150.
16. Ibid., p. 151.
17. It is significant that the Albany Conference in 1845 expressly warned their friends against such phenomena. Cf. Proceedings 1845.
18. Harrison op cit., p. 12.
19. Ibid.
20. Cf. Lindén, *The Last Trump*, Frankfurt/M. 1978, pp. 141—144.
21. Ibid., pp. 142, 143. Dr. Fernand Fisel of Indiana University of Pennsylvania has kindly sent a duplicated set of this Hiram Edson version to the author. This version will be consulted for this investigation. But it should be most lucidly understood that the Percy T. Magan and Spaulding collection of the early EGW visions, now also available in duplicated form by Dr. Fisel are not in any way indispensable for the conclusions arrived at in this study. Hiram Edson's contemporary handwritten

- copies of the early shut-door visions give further support to the ideas expressed in many other published or unpublished EGW visions in 1845—1851. In the view of the present write Edson's version reveals a more genuine unpolished form of the early EGW visions.
22. The letters of commendation were given from the President of the Northern European Division, Pastor Duncan Eva, and from The Swedish Union President, Pastor Odd Jordal.
  23. Ellen G. White, *Experience and Views*, (fort short) Saratoga Springs, N.Y. 1851. (64 pp.)
  24. Yr. 1850 No. W. 58. Title: Sutton Vision (Manuscript copied by Hiram Edson) Author: White, Ellen Gould (Harmon) 1827—1915 Notations 1607 Date 1850 1850 W 58 *Advent Source Collections* 1607. Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Mich. The Heritage Room.
  25. This part is a direct quotation of a passage in the genuine Dorchester Vision, as copied by Hiram Edson. Dr. Fisel's copy, p. IV. As to the date of this vision Edson reports Oct. 23, 1850, whereas the version in "Experience and Views," (orig. 1851) opens bluntly thus: "September 23, the Lord showed me that He had stretched out His hand the second time, etc." White, Ellen, 1916, p. 74. However, there is no conclusive evidence to sustain that date for this vision.
  26. Such terms as "Israel," the "household," or the "Little Flock," all mean the same thing, or the Sabbatarian Adventists.
  27. Cf *The Dorchester Vision*, of Oct. 23, 1850, as copied by H. Edson, the Fisel duplication, p. IV. The "gathering" expressed the fervent expectation of an early parousia for the Sabbatarian group about 1850. Most likely the fierce struggles as to the popular Age-to-Come ideas, saying that the Jews would gather to Jerusalem a short time before the second coming of Christ, ideas defended by Crosier and Hiram Edson, had also "scattered" the group. Cf. J.N. Andrews to *Present Truth*, Oct. 16, 1849, as stated in PT, Dec. 1849, p. 39.
  28. This passage is repeated almost *in verbatim* in the *Dorchester Vision*, as copied by Hiram Edson. The Fisel duplication, p. IV.
  - 28a. Ellen G. White, *Eperience and Views*, Wash. D.C. 1945, p. 74.
  29. The adjective "dormant", and also "stupid" are not uncommon in the early EGW visions. Cf *Present Truth*, Apr. 1850, p. 71.
  30. Here ends the quotation from the Hiram Edson version of the Oswego vision, July 29, 1850. Fisel's duplicated ed.
  31. Cf. *Present Truth*, Nov. 1850, p. 86 Italics added, and *Great Controversy* (Ellen G. White) 1911, pp. 373, 374. Cf the *Dorchester Vision*, Oct. 23, 1850. The Fisel ed. The H. Edson text is exactly the same as the one in PT.
  32. This part is taken from the *Dorchester vision*, Oct. 23, 1850, as rendered in the Fisel duplicated. p. IV. For an explanation of the Millerite and SDA interpretation of the term, "daily" in Dan. 8:13 et cetera, see *SDA Encyclopedia*, Washington, D.C. 1966, pp. 319—323, and *Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine*, Wash. D.C., 1957, pp. 255—257, 261—263. It is very obvious that the interpretation in 1957 was much more in line with modern biblical scholarship.
  33. *Present Truth*, Nov. 1850, p. 87.
  34. Ellen G. White, *Experience and Views*, Wash. D.C. 1945, p. 52.
  35. The date suggested for this gathering in *The Comprehensive Index to the Writings of Ellen G. White*, III. Mountain View, Calif. 1963, p. 2954, is not conclusive.

36. This passage is an almost verbal repetition of the H. Edson version, as recorded in Dr. Fisel's duplicated version.
37. The text reflects very clearly the description in Apoc. XX: 8-9.
38. This description reminds us very lucidly of EGW's first printed vision. Cf. *Day-Star*, Jan. 24, 1846.
39. This *extension* in comparison with the H. Edson version reflects the *apocryphal* typology of the New Jerusalem. Cf. *A Word to the "Little Flock"*, New Bedford, Maine 1847, pp. 15-18.
40. At this early period the SDA group had no detailed concept of the so-called investigative judgment prior to the Parousia.
41. This may be an allusion to Mal. 4:1.
42. It is not clear which paper EGW had in mind. But Enoch Jacobs' shut-door journal, where she and James White printed some of their comments may very well be that periodical which ended in 1847, when the editor joined the Shakers. Cf. *The SDA Encyclopedia*, Wash. D.C. 1966, p. 331.
43. Cf. *Selected Messages* (EGW), II. Wash. D.C. 1958, p. 374.
44. *The (EGW) Sutton Vision*, Dr. Fisel's duplicated version. Emphasis supplied. For the divergent views of the SDA pioneers as to apocalyptic interpretation, see L.E. Froom, *Movement of Destiny*, Wash. D.C. 1971, pp. 77-132.
45. Cf. Arthur W. Spalding op.cit. pp. 205, 206. L.E. Froom, *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*, IV. Wash. D.C. 1954, pp. 901-904. Ibid., *Movement of Destiny*, Wash. D.C. 1971, pp. 78-89.
46. Cf. L.E. Froom, *Movement of Destiny*, pp. 78-88.
47. Lindén, *The Last Trump*, p. 130. Cf. Froom, *Movement of Destiny*, pp. 78-88.
48. Fernand Fisel, *Three Early Visions of Mrs. E.G. White Copied by Hiram Edson: An Evaluation* (Duplicated, n.d.)
49. Ibid., p. 6. EGW was recaptured by J.W. into the shut-door belief!
50. *Mrs. White's Vision in Oswego*, N.Y. Jul. 29, 1850, p. 11. Fisel ed.
51. *The Dorchester Vision, Oct. 23, 1850, as Copied by Hiram Edson*, Fisel ed, p. V. "Then while the plagues are falling the scapegoat is being led away. He makes a mighty struggle to escape: but he is held fast by the hand that bears him away. If he should effect his escape Israel would be destroyed (or slain). I saw that it would take time to bear him away into the land of forgetfulness after the sins were put upon his head." Ibid. p. V.
52. Ibid., p. IV.
53. *Present Truth*, Nov. 1850, pp. 86, 87.
54. *The Sutton Vision*, pp. 1-3. Fisel ed.
55. *Present Truth*, Nov. 1850, p. 86.
56. Ibid.
57. Cf. *The Sutton Vision*, Fisel ed.
58. *The Sutton Vision*, p. I. Fisel ed.
59. Ibid.
60. Ibid., p. III.
61. *Present Truth*, Nov. 1850, p. 86. "The angel then pointed to Bro. Bates and said, be careful how thou treadest, lest the flock be torn. Draw near to God, thou hast been in danger. Can ye not see it. That must be healed every whit. This people must be humble. I begged of Jesus to forbid that there should be any discord among the shepherds, for then the flock would be scattered as sheep without a shepherd." *The Sutton Vision of Mrs. E.G. White As Copied by Hiram Edson*, pp. 11, 111. Fisel ed.

In many readers the archaic language the angel is given by the visionary may make a comical impression, but among the "Little Flock" this vocabulary most likely added to the concept of solemn, inspired diction. It is hard not to think that the cited settings reflected the thoughts of the Whites in their private discussions. It is apparent that

there existed at this time in 1850 open disagreement between James White and Joseph Bates, when the struggles for leadership among the Sabbatharians had not yet been decided.

62. *The Dorchester Vision*, Oct. 23, 1850. The Fisel ed.

63. *Present Truth*, Nov. 1850, pp. 86, 87. Cf. The original Dorchester Vision, Oct. 23, 1850 in the Fisel ed. There is no convincing evidence available for the September time.

64. *Present Truth*, Nov. 1850, pp. 86, 87.

65. Hiram Edson, *An Exposition of Scripture Prophecy Showing the Final Return of the Jews in 1850*. Canandaigua, N.Y.

66. Ellen G. White, *Early Writings*, South Bend, Ind. 1916, pp. 74, 75. The revisions were most likely made in order to separate Sabbatharian adventists from the Age-to-Come view, which was very popular among many millenarians.

67. Ellen G. White to Sister Arabella, Aug. 8, 1850. WEA. Wash. D.C. Young EGW moved in a typical "charismatic" environment with enthusiastic phenomena, such as healing and tongue speaking. Cf. Hiram Edson's report how "Bro. Ralph spoke in a new tongue, and gave the interpretation in power, and in the demonstration of the Holy Ghost." *Present Truth*, Dec. 1849, p. 36. Cf. Lindén, *The Last Trump*, pp. 150, 152, 153, 164.

68. *The Sutton Vision*, Fisel ed. See also Lindén, *The Last Trump*, pp. 202, 203.

69. *The Oswego Vision*, Jul. 29, 1850. The Fisel ed.

70. There are even stronger statements about "erring brethren" in the "unreleased" official material. Also in 1850 Mrs. White informed friends as to the state of a certain brother Terry. EGW remarks: "God shew me at the conference that the last ray of light was taken from him and that he would visit him with his judgments. There is something about that man black, that he did not

confess at the conference. He is *unclean*, unholy in the sight of God and if you have him in your house you will be unclean because he is a dead body. The power of Satan is very great and Terry will make a complete agent for Satan to work through to destroy you all.: White to Brother and Sister Loveland, Dec. 13, 1850. WEA. Wash. D.C. Italics supplied. This radical sectarian mind reminds us of the exclusive spirit of the radical Plymouth Brethren.

Another interesting case is Mrs. White's message to Bro. Hollis, a former pastor among the non-Sabbatarian Adventists, and most likely a potential rival to James White. In 1851 EGW declared: "God has shown me Brother Hollis' case in vision and unless he soon becomes a little child and breaks in pieces before God, he will be left to himself. . . . God has shown me the true state of Brother Hollis. I know *from the vision* that his influence *has been bad and against us.*" Ellen G. White to Brother and Sister Loveland, Apr. 1, 1851. Emphasis added. WEA. Wash. D.C.

71. Cf. above, p. 24 ff.

72. *Day-Star*, Jan. 24, 1846.

73. *Ibid.*, Emphasis added.

74. *A Word to the "Little Flock"*, Brunswick, Maine, May 30, 1847, p. 5. Cf. Mt. 25:10.

75. *Day-Star*, Jan. 24, 1846.

76. *Ibid.*

77. Cf. note 74.

78. *To the Little Remnant Scattered Abroad*, Portland, Maine, Apr. 6, 1846. (Broadside).

79. *Ibid.*

80. Ellen G. White to Bates, Jul. 13, 1847. WEA. Wash. D.C.

81. *Ibid.*

82. *Advent Herald*, Mar. 26, 1845.

83. *The Day-Star*, Aug. 5, 1845, the editorial column.

84. Meaning Sunday.

85. Without a question a misprint for Dammon.
86. Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts*, II. Battle Creek, Mich. 1860, p. 40. Italics supplied.
87. Ibid., p. 41.
88. Ibid., p. 42.
89. Ellen G. White to Bates, Jul. 13, 1847. WEA. Wash. D.C. Only the first page of this letter had been "released" prior to this discovery.
90. Ibid.
91. It is of some significance that two visionaries were said to have been called to the office as charismatic leaders for the disappointed Millerites before Ellen Gould Harmon (White). See T. Housel Jemison, *A Prophet Among You*. Mountain View, Calif. 1955, pp. 485—489. As to the common operation of millenarian prophets and prophetesses in England during the 18th—19th centuries, see J.F.C. Harrison, *The Second Coming*, London 1979, pp. 11—108.
92. Ellen G. White to Bates, Jul. 13, 1847. WEA. Wash. D.C.
93. Ibid. Somewhat later, however, the two Millerites parted company.
94. Ibid.
95. Ibid. The original spelling and grammar retained in places.
96. Ibid. Emphasis added.
97. Ibid.
98. *To The Little Remnant Scattered Abroad*. Portland, Maine, Apr. 6, 1846.
99. Ibid.
100. Ibid. italics supplied.
101. Ibid. Italics added.
102. Ibid.
103. Ellen G. White, *Early Writings*, South Bend, Ind. 1916, pp. 85—96. Originally publ. in 1854.
104. Cf. The Book of Hebrews, ch. 9:12, 25, et cetera.
105. *A Word to the "Little Flock"*, 1847. New Brunswick, Maine, pp. 11, 12.
106. Ibid.
107. P. Gerard Damsteegt, *Foundations of the Seventh-day Adventist Message and Mission*. Grand Rapids 1977, pp. 158, 159.
108. *A Word to the "Little Flock"*, New Brunswick, Maine 1847, p. 12. Italics supplied.
109. *A Word to the "Little Flock"*, New Brunswick, Maine, 1847, p. 22.
110. Ibid., Emphasis added.
111. Ellen G. White to Bates, Jul. 13, 1847. WEA. Wash. D.C.
112. *A Word to the "Little Flock"*, New Brunswick, Maine, 1847, pp. 2, 3, 22.
113. Otis Nichols to William Miller, Apr. 20, 1846. The Miller Papers. Aurora College, Aurora, Ill.
114. Ibid., Italics supplied.
115. *Present Truth*, August 1849, pp. 21—22.
116. This expression might have been a reference to her own visions.
117. *Present Truth*, August 1849, pp. 21, 22.
118. Ibid., Italics added.
119. Ibid.
120. Cf. Harrison op.cit. parts I—II.
121. *Present Truth*, August 1849, p. 22.
122. Ibid.
123. Meaning the main tenets of Sabbatarian Adventism.
124. *Present Truth*, August 1849, p. 122. Italics supplied.
125. Ibid.
126. I.e. the Sabbatarian Adventists.
127. *Present Truth*, August 1849, p. 22. Emphasis supplied.
128. Ibid., Dec. 1849, p. 35.
129. Ibid.
130. Ellen G. White to the Hastings, Mar. 24—30, 1849. WEA. Wash. D.C.
131. Cf. *The Present Truth*, Dec. 1849—May, 1850, passim.
132. *Present Truth*, Dec. 1849, p. 45.
133. Ibid., Mar. 1850, p. 64. Italics added.
134. "Time has continued on a few years longer than they expected, therefore they think it may continue a few years more, and in this way their minds are

- being led from present truth, out after the world. In these things I saw great danger; . . . I saw that the time for Jesus to be in the most holy place was nearly finished, and that time can last but a little longer . . . The sealing time is very short, and soon it will be over." Ellen G. White, *To Those Who Are Receiving the Seal of the Living God*. Topsham, Maine, Jan. 31, 1849. WEA. Wash. D.C.
135. *Present Truth*, Nov. 1850, pp. 86, 87.
  136. *Advent Review*, Sep. 1850, pp. 35—39.
  137. *Oswego Vision*, Jul. 29, 1850, p. H. The Fisel ed. Italics supplied.
  138. See e.g. Ellen White to Brother and Sister Collins, Feb. 10, 1850. WEA. Wash. D.C.
  139. See Ellen G. White in *A Word to the "Little Flock."* New Brunswick, Maine, 1847, p. 12.
  140. *Present Truth*, Dec. 1849, p. 45.
  141. *A Vision*, Topsham, Maine, Apr. 7, 1847.
  142. Ibid.
  143. *A Word to the "Little Flock."* New Brunswick, Maine, 1847, pp. 18, 19.
  144. Ibid., p. 19. Italics supplied.
  145. "I saw that the nominal churches and nominal adventists, like Judas betray us to the Catholics, to obtain their influence to come against us." *The Dorchester Vision*, Oct. 23, 1850. Hiram Edson version. Fisel ed.
  146. Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, I. Wash. D.C. 1958, pp. 59—76.
  147. Arthur L. White, *Ellen G. White and the Shut Door Question*, Wash. D.C. Nov. 10, 1971, pp. 31—37. Duplicated. F.D. Nichol, *Ellen G. White and Her Critics*, Wash. D.C. 1951, pp. 253—285. Ibid., *The Midnight Cry*, Wash. D.C. 1944, p. 460, the footnote. Arthur W. Spalding, *Origin and History of Seventh-day Adventists*, Wash. D.C. 1961, pp. 164, 165.
  148. Joseph Bates, *A Seal of the Living God. A Hundred Forty-Four Thousand, of the Servants of God Being Sealed*, in 1849. New Bedford 1849.
  149. Hiram Edson, *An Exposition of Scripture Prophecy, Showing the Final Return of the Jews in 1850*. Canandalgua, N.Y. 1849.
  150. P. Gerard Damsteegt, *Foundations of the Seventh-day Adventist Message and Mission*. Grand Rapids, Mich., 1977, pp. 103—134.
  151. *Advent Review*, Aug. 1850.
  152. Rolf Poehler op.cit. p. 95. Cf. Damsteegt, op.cit. pp. 161, 162.
  153. Poehler op.cit. p. 97.
  154. Ibid. A missing statement by James White in Poehler merits to be quoted: "THE OPEN DOOR (sic!) we teach, and invite those who have an ear to hear to come to it and find salvation through Jesus Christ . . . If it be said that we are of the OPEN DOOR and Sabbath theory, we shall not object; for this is our faith." *Review and Herald*, Feb. 17, 1852, p. 95.
  155. Poehler op.cit. p. 98.
  156. Cf. above, pp. 159—160.
  157. Ellen G. White to Brother and Sister Collins, Feb. 10, 1850. (Letter 4, 1850) WEA. Wash. D.C.
  159. Ellen G. White, *To Those Who Are Receiving the Seal of the Living God*, Topsham, Maine, Jan. 31, 1849. Emphasis supplied.
  160. See e.g. Arthur L. White, *Ellen G. White and The Shut Door Question*. Wash. D.C. Nov. 10, 1971, pp. 5—31, 44. Duplicated. F.D. Nichol, *Ellen G. White and Her Critics*, Wash. D.C. 1951, ch. 15. Poehler op.cit. pp. 95—120.
  161. Ellen G. White, *A Vision*. (A "Broad-side" printed by Joseph Bates) Topsham, Maine, Apr. 7, 1847. Ibid., *To Those Who Are Receiving the Seal of the Living God*. Topsham, Maine, Jan. 31, 1849.
  162. Poehler op.cit. pp. 91, 92.
  163. Cf. above pp. 49—60.
  164. Poehler op.cit. p. 97.

165. Ibid., pp. 97, 98.
166. *Second Advent Review and Sabbath Herald Extra*, Jul. 21, 1851, p. 4. Vol. II:1.
167. Most likely lack of interest in the visions accounted for this failure rather than lack of funds.
168. Arthur L. White to the author, Oct. 21, 1971. In addition to Mormon prejudice, A.W. mentions "a few outbreaks of fanaticism in the Millerite movement."
169. Ellen G. White to Brother and Sister Dodge, Jul. 21, 1851. WEA. Wash. D.C. Italics added.
170. Her husband J.W. did very little to announce her revised version of the early visions in the church paper, another sign of the critical passage for EGW.
171. F.D. Nichol, *Ellen G. White and Her Critics*, Wash. D.C. 1951, pp. 619—643. Evidently the editor had no choice but admit the changes!
172. *Day-Star*, Jan. 24, 1846. Italics supplied.
173. Nichol, *Ellen G. White and Her Critics*, Wash. D.C. 1951, pp. 281—285.
174. Ellen G. White, *To Those Who Are Receiving the Seal of the Living God*. Topsham, Maine, Jan. 31, 1849.
175. Damsteegt op.cit. pp. 276, 278. Poehler op.cit. pp. 138, 139.
176. *Review and Herald*, Feb. 17, 1852, p. 95. Jul. 4, 1854, pp. 172, 173.
177. *Review and Herald*, Oct. 16, 1855, p. 16. Italics added.
178. Ibid., Jan. 10, 1856, p. 118. It is true that for example a few articles were publ. in an App. to "Experience and Views" in 1854, and she attended some meetings, but generally speaking her visionary activities were strongly curtailed during those years.
179. *Review and Herald*, Jun. 9, 1853, p. 13. Italics supplied.
180. Cf. Damsteegt op.cit. 276, 278 et passim. Poehler op. cit. pp. 97, 98, 138, 139 et passim.



### III. From Shut Door to Investigative Judgement

#### 1. Attempts at a New Theology

The shut-door theology came into being in an attempt to defend Snow's October date, and it lasted only for a short time among most non-Sabbatarian Adventists.<sup>1</sup> For only a concept of the Second Coming around the corner, to occur within a few weeks, or a year at the most, could defend this anti-gospel concept as the majority camp saw it. Among the Sabbatarians Shut Door lived on several years beyond the termini among the Sunday keeping Adventists. It is then interesting to notice how the original understanding of Shut Door in its salvation-limiting sense evaporated in a short time, as soon as members of the group finally gave up time setting in 1851. For from that point of time the "door" eventually began to crack open for saints and sinners alike, as the Whites and other leaders saw it. Thus the heterodox shut-door concept saying that God had for ever left the "nominal" Adventists and the churches in damnation and no longer eligible to salvation had to give way for the "pan-Christian" view that there was indeed "abundant grace" for everybody.

For some time after the "Copernican discovery," however, the October date was referred to as a salvation-historical terminus, or a gate through which every candidate for salvation beyond the ominous October day had to pass, if saved at all. At any rate no one could willfully reject the implications of the great transfer in heaven, as Sabbatarian Adventists believed, and yet win eternal life. Christ had left his place in the first apartment of the sanctuary and moved his majestic throne into the Most Holy Place on that October day, when most Millerites expected the Saviour to begin the descent to this earth. Once this reinterpretation had been accepted, EGW gave further support to this novel doctrine.<sup>2</sup>

At first the Sabbatarian pioneers could not tell exactly what had taken place in heaven on October 22 when the sun again rose on earth. James White was happy to accept Turner's new theology already in January 1845, and so did Ellen Harmon in February of the same year.<sup>3</sup> The following year another Sabbatarian O.R.L. Crosier and two other Millerites, Hiram Edson and F.B. Hahn, published a long essay in a *Day-Star*

*Extra*.<sup>4</sup> Their hermeneutic was based upon the so called types and analogy with the Old Testament levitical laws and their antitypical fulfillment in New Testament times. With the presupposition in view that October 22, 1844 marked a new era in "Heilsgeschichte" they were confident of a correct understanding of Snow's *terminus*. Among other things Crosier stated that those Christians who maintained that the atonement was finished on the cross, erred greatly, for in fact the real atonement had commenced on October 22. Golgotha was no atonement for sins.<sup>5</sup> Again Crosier was strongly influenced by the popular speculations of the Age-to-Come theology. This stream of theological thought has been seen in the Christian church from time to time since the days of Origen and has always been branded as heresy. But Crosier and Edson joyfully accepted the glorious vistas of the "Apocatastasis" exposition.<sup>6</sup>

## 2. Crosier's Popular Reinterpretation of Daniel 8:14

With such prospects in view Crosier and his colleagues shared the popular interpretation of the return of the Jews to Palestine prior to the parousia. The earthly Jerusalem would again be a center for a theocracy and that "dispensation" would last for many years. It is simply a fact that Crosier here cut across fundamental beliefs of the Millerites, and it is remarkable how generous the Whites were in endorsing such novel views which EGW apparently recommended to "all saints."<sup>7</sup> In retrospect Adventist writers take it for granted that EGW's recommendation only referred to *some* portions of that article.<sup>8</sup> But in the 1840's the situation was radically different.

Crosier certainly blurred the line of demarcation between time and eternity in stating that the two "Dispensations" of the "fullness of times" and that of the Gospel Dispensation for a time ran parallel. Crosier concluded: "There is a short period of overlapping or running together of the two Dispensations, in which the peculiarities of both mingle like the twilight, minglings of light and darkness."<sup>9</sup> On October 22 the seventh trumpet of the Apocalypse began to sound. In time the Sabbatarian group rejected the popular views of an earthly millennium altogether and thus became a kind of a millennialist movement.<sup>10</sup>

In what lines then did Crosier offer an exit to a novel shut-door theology to the Sabbatarians? Despite the most questionable Age-to-Come theories, as all Adventists true to Miller's fundamental belief must have judged the essay, Crosier nevertheless presented some new prospects to

the confused shut-door brethren. In the first place Crosier advanced the idea that there was no atonement on the cross, for in reality the atonement had begun to function only after Christ had moved his throne into the second apartment of the sanctuary, on October 22. Elaborating further on this theme Crosier introduced another important concept to the Sabbatarian group by explaining that there was a definite distinction between the *forgiveness* of sins by Christ, as soon as the particular sinful acts had been confessed, and the *blotting out* of sins. The latter transaction took place only after 1844. Thirdly, Crosier facilitated new interpretations of the October events by his hermeneutical key to find new significance for the “Gospel Dispensation” in the Old Testament. In fact the New Testament must be understood from what could be seen in typology in the Old Testament.

But most important of all: Crosier’s remarkable essay contained the nucleus of a new sanctuary theology as to October 22, once the “extreme” shut-door theology had to be abandoned. The sharp dichotomy between forgiven and blotted out sins paved the way for the Pre-Advent judgment, as the SDA church prefers to call it today.<sup>11</sup> It comes as no surprise that this uniquely SDA doctrine of the so called investigative judgment could not be worked out over night. The remaining documents show that the radical view of Shut Door in its salvation-limiting sense lived on also when in 1850 Joseph Bates began to interpret Shut Door as a sort of judgment of the saints and of those few outside the Millerites, such as their children, who were “presented on his breastplate of judgment.” Reference were made to Daniel 7:9—13 and to some other texts.<sup>12</sup> Commenting on this exposition a recent Adventist scholar remarks, that Crosier’s article provided the Sabbatarian Adventists with “an explanation for the Disappointment,” and was “a major soteriological contribution,” showing that “the atonement was not yet finished.”<sup>13</sup>

Damsteegt has shown that Joseph Bates and James White disagreed for years after 1851 in some details as to a judgment announced by the first angel in Revelation 14.<sup>14</sup> In 1855 a more definitive article on the judgment in heaven from 1844 was presented by the young editor Uriah Smith.<sup>15</sup> With Scriptural references to Dan. 7:10, Rev. 20:12, 1 Pet. 4:17, and 1 Tim. 5:24 Smith concluded that a judgment in heaven must include the “individual character” of every believer. Both the dead and the living will be called “before that great tribunal in heaven.”<sup>16</sup> Not long after that James White changed his mind and accepted Smith’s exposition. Evidently James White was the first Adventist to employ the term, “the investigative judgment.” This happened in 1857.<sup>17</sup> But both Smith and White were

heavily indebted for this view to J. N. Andrews!

EGW used various designations in her works for the new theology. At first she expressed the juridical procedures alluded to by Crosier simply as "the judgment."<sup>18</sup> After some time, however, she, too, employed the American term "the investigative judgment" for this concept.<sup>19</sup> In dealing with the Jewish ceremonial service she also made use of terms such as the "special atonement" or the "final atonement."<sup>20</sup> By 1851, or somewhat later, the once so important term, "Shut Door," was outmoded and a downright disgrace.<sup>21</sup> By 1857, however, the whole interpretation of the October events had been subject to a major metamorphosis. The final reinterpretation was an improvement over the old drastic shut-door view by not being so sensitive to the time factor. By degrees the October date lost its significance, however. But this was a long story and merits a separate work.

## CHAP. IV Notes

1. Cf. Above ch. II et III.
2. *A Word to the "Little Flock"* Brunswick, Maine, 1847, p. 12.
3. *The Day-Star Extra*, Cincinnati, Ohio, Feb. 7, 1846. Cf. above ch.s. II, III.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Cf. above, ch. II. *A Word to the "Little Flock"*, p. 12. Damsteegt remarked, probably correctly, that the reprints of C's article in Sabbatarian journals may be taken to indicate that there were some portions in the famous essay which they questioned. Cf. Damsteegt, op.cit. p. 125, note 139.
7. Cf. Ch. II. Damsteegt op.cit. p. 125, note 139.
8. Damsteegt op.cit. p. 125, esp. note 139.
9. *Day-Star Extra*, Feb. 7, 1846.
10. *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia* Wash. D.C. 1966, pp. 784—787.
11. *Adventist Review*, Oct. 30, 1980, pp. 4—6. (Formerly *Review and Herald*) Damsteegt op.cit. p. 132.
12. Damsteegt op.cit. p. 166.
13. Ibid., p. 131.
14. Ibid., p. 167.
15. Damsteegt op.cit. p. 167.
16. *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, Wash. D.C. 1966, p. 603.
17. Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. I, Battle Creek, Mich. 1858, p. 198. In the same p. EGW refers to the "(investigative) judgment" as the "atonement." Cf. Damsteegt op.cit. p. 168.
18. Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, Wash. D.C. 1911, ch. 20.
19. Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. I, Battle Creek, Mich. 1858, p. 162.
20. Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. I, Battle Creek, Mich. 1858, p. 149. Ibid., *The Great Controversy*, Wash. D.C. 1911, pp. 422, 480.
21. Cf. above, ch. V.

## IV. The Shut Door Debate: 1852—1885

### 1. Attacks by Competing Sabbatarian Adventists Prior to 1874

Shut Door did not end in 1851—1852, insofar as the Whites and the Sabbatarian Adventists were concerned. On the contrary it certainly became a thorn in the flesh of EGW and the leaders as long as the prophetess lived; and after her death it has persisted as a major problem with SDA Church. Opponents have always used Shut Door as a weapon against EGW and the SDA denomination, and denominational writers have devoted an impressive amount of time and ingenuity to prove that EGW never in a vision supported the mercy-limiting concept of Shut Door, however strongly her brethren clung to that false idea.<sup>1</sup> Right up to this day this struggle over EGW and Shut Door is a very much alive topic in the SDA Church. Such have been the long term consequences of James White's dilemma in 1851 as to how he should handle the shift in theology in reference to EGW. For if the whole question had been dealt with squarely then, there would have been no ground for critics to attack the Adventists on that score in the future.

Accordingly, Shut Door has followed EGW as a shadow over the years. The first conflict on the issue broke out in 1853—1854, in the midst of EGW's "silent years." Two Sabbatarian ministers, probably of the self-taught sort, H. S. Case and C. P. Russell, rebelled against the Whites and other leaders in the unorganized Sabbatarian movement.<sup>2</sup> This "defection" began evidently at Jackson, Michigan, in 1853. Somewhat later this faction received some support among Sabbatarian Adventists and could print a journal of their own, the *Messenger of Truth*. On that ground they were called the Messenger Party by the Whites.<sup>3</sup> Since this paper seems to be extinct, there is no way of stating their beliefs in detail, but from other sources we know that the *Messenger of Truth* advocated a strong anti-EGW position and defended the popular Age-to-Come theology,<sup>4</sup> ideas quite common also among Sabbatarian writers such as O. R. L. Crosier and for a time, Hiram Edson.

The "Messenger Party" had quite a following for some years in the '50s, mostly in Wisconsin.<sup>5</sup> Arthur L. White, who has done some research in the

history of the so called spurious EGW Camden Vision of June 29, 1851, mentions that one of the leaders in that Messenger Party group was a former Sabbatarian Adventist of the EGW persuasion, R. R. Chapin at Clarkson, New York.<sup>6</sup> Since this Chapin is mentioned as the father or compiler of the "spurious" Camden vision, which expressed EGW shut-door view very frankly, it goes without saying that the Messenger Party most certainly also "exposed" EGW for her unorthodox shut-door theology. While Arthur L. White denies the authenticity of the so called Camden vision, he admits that it "was copied by a man who had apostatized."<sup>7</sup>

Rejection of Mrs White as a prophetess and promulgation of the Age-to-Come theories, with a special emphasis on the future role of the Jews during the millenium, marked this literalist group of Sabbatarian Adventists. Richard C. Nickels, the best known historian of the Church of God (Seventh Day) Adventists, sees two important factors in the Messenger Party. In his view the opponents "brought to the fore the two key issues which created the division of Sabbath Adventists into the Seventh Day Adventist church and the Church of God: (1) church name—Church of God versus Seventh Day Adventists (sic), and (2) the question of the visions of Ellen G. White."<sup>8</sup>

The extent to which the shut-door debate figured in this important division can only be decided from the parts played by R. R. Chapin and the former ministers of "the James White party," J. M. Stephenson and D. P. Hall, who likewise defected to the Messenger Party in 1855.<sup>9</sup> Gilbert Cranmer, one of the fathers in the Church of God organization, in his late memoirs, or the dictating of his life to his stepson, M. A. Branch, mentions that the shut-door doctrine, or the concept "that the door of salvation for sinners was past" had been advocated by Mrs. White.<sup>10</sup> A careful examination of all the documents pertaining to the rise of the opposing Sabbatarian organization, the Church of God (Seventh Day), shows that this time prior to 1863 was a very critical period in the history of the SDA Church. The Whites and those who stood with them denounced the Messenger Party as hopeless fanatics.<sup>11</sup>

The opposition against the visions by the Messenger Party had hardly abated, when a new and more serious attack was launched against EGW as a shut-door visionary. The controversy was building up in the midst of the critical Civil War years. In January 1862 a member, W. H. Ball of Washington, N.H.—in EGW's New England—questioned the authority and teachings of Mrs. White in reference to Shut Door. Like many others Ball found it "strange that a divine revelation from heaven should prove untrue."<sup>12</sup> As Poehler has already pointed out the editor Uriah Smith

denied the validity of Ball's reasoning, contending that the EGW vision of March 1849 "expressed a solemn truth which is no less true today than it was then."<sup>13</sup>

The real trouble, however, developed three years later in Iowa. At Marion, Iowa, two of the leading officials in the newly founded conference, Elders B. F. Snook and William H. Brinkerhoff, President and Secretary of that constitution, expressed very radical criticisms against EGW's early visions in 1845–1851 after having received the primary documents from the East. In 1866 their criticism was expressed in a 27-page pamphlet, *The Visions of E. G. White, Not of God*.<sup>14</sup> In that document the former SDA leaders attempted to prove that EGW had supported the unorthodox shut-door view in her early visions, material that the denomination later had suppressed.<sup>15</sup>

This defection from the SDA Church hastened the founding of a new Sabbatarian sect, today known as the Church of God (Seventh Day), Denver, Colorado.<sup>16</sup> The seriousness of this opposition is also evident from the rebuttals published by SDA officials. In the *Review* Uriah Smith, then a warm supporter of EGW, wrote a whole series of articles titled, *The Visions—Objections Answered*.<sup>17</sup> Eventually in 1868 those articles with great deal of additional material were collected in a separate volume, *The Visions of Mrs. E. G. White. A Manifestation of Spiritual Gifts According to the Scriptures*. This apology was a kind of forerunner to the SDA editor, F. D. Nichol, monumental EGW defense in 1951.<sup>18</sup> Smith's pamphlet contained a strong imprimatur character, as James White unreservedly endorsed the contents and warmly recommended the booklet.<sup>19</sup>

How did Uriah Smith answer the critics in Iowa as to the shut-door "charge"? The editor allotted most space to the crucial shut-door problem or almost 20 pages. Smith began his argument by stating how important it is to consult the visions of EGW in "what appears in manuscript over her own signature in her own handwriting."<sup>20</sup> For according to Smith there were afloat among the critics many merely heresay contentions in reference to what EGW allegedly had been teaching as to Shut Door. The common idea among those opponents that Shut Door meant the "close of probation" could not be supported from the genuine EGW documents. Referring to logic Smith summed up the argument of the critics as follows: "1. The visions teach that the door of mercy was shut in 1844, and that there has been no salvation for sinners, and hence no genuine conversions since that time. 2. But there have been multitudes of genuine conversions since then. 3. Therefore the visions are false."<sup>21</sup> To be sure Smith denied that proposition. On the contrary he affirmed that the visions teach that

"a door was opened as well as one shut in 1844." The visions never taught a shut door in "its extremest sense," as was the case in some shut-door believers apart from EGW. This fact in itself defended the validity in EGW's claims, Smith argued. Presenting the theology of Crosier, Hiram Edson and others in reference to the heavenly sanctuary Smith attempted to find support for a reinterpretation of the shut-door in Matthew 25. "A new era, so to speak, was reached in the ministry of our Lord" on October 22, 1844, he suggested. And this change "in his relation to the world," was nearly as great as "that which took place when he entered upon his work in the first apartment of the heavenly temple," Smith continued.<sup>22</sup>

In such categories the editor reasoned according to the fundamentally different interpretation of the shut-door, or rather the so called open and shut door, as it became a standard doctrine of the "investigative judgment" of the believers, dead and living, as from October 22 1844. This line of reasoning was of course unheard of in the shut-door era, 1845–1851. Smith moreover made little use of the original shut-door documents. There is nothing in his references to either Joseph Turner or Samuel S. Snow, not to mention Joseph Bates or James White. He does refer to a few EGW sentences without exact documentation. He stated: "Now what are the representations of visions in relation to this time? Do they teach a more exclusive shut door than Scripture facts and testimonies which we have presented? In their teachings we find such expressions as these: "I saw that Jesus finished his mediation in the holy place in 1844." "He has gone into the most holy, where the faith of Israel now reaches." "His Spirit and sympathy are now withdrawn from the world, and our sympathy should be with him." "The wicked could not be benefited by our prayers now." "The wicked world whom God had rejected." "It seemed that the whole world was taken in the snare; that there could not be one left," (referring to Spiritualism) "The time for their salvation is past."<sup>23</sup>

Smith had selected a few typical shut-door expressions without any exact references to the settings. His next assignment was to find a suitable explanation to those phrases in order to avoid the damaging shut-door stigma. Since F. D. Nichol rejected most of his comments, it may be true to say that Smith was not exactly convincing in his efforts to give a different meaning to the phrases than what was originally meant. His way of interpreting the well-known setting, "the time for their salvation was past,"<sup>24</sup> can be selected to support this conclusion. Smith argues that the phrase referred to "the revivalists," or to non-Sabbatarian Christians (Sunday-keeping Adventists) who rejected the theory of Christ's new ministration in heaven as from October 22, 1844 and not to sinners.<sup>25</sup> But

this conclusion does not agree with the original shut-door policy, not to have anything to do with either “sinners in the world” or Christians who rejected the validity of the October time movement.

And one more thing before we leave Smith for this time: it is certainly remarkable that Smith culled a phrase, purporting to be genuine EGW statement, from the so called spurious Camden vision.<sup>26</sup> In fact no less than two settings agree with the present edition of this “spurious” vision, namely “the wicked world could not be benefited by our prayers now,” and “the wicked world whom God had rejected.”<sup>27</sup> Members of the Ellen G. White Estate may have an answer to this riddle.

James White’s autobiography, *Life Incidents*, appeared in the same year as Smith’s defense of Ellen G. White’s visions. By comparison one would certainly look upon James White’s treatment of the difficult shut-door years as being more true to life, albeit not so far as his consort is concerned. James White conceded that the shut-door Sabbatarians, apart from Ellen Harmon (White) certainly entertained the view, “to say the least, that probation was ended” in 1844.<sup>28</sup> In another place he was even more explicit and mentioned that “the reader can hardly see how those who held fast their Advent experience, as illustrated by the parable of the Ten Virgins, could fail to come to the conclusion that probation for sinners had closed.”<sup>29</sup> Only the new expositions from the Old Testament types about the atonement enabled the pioneers to find a new interpretation of Shut Door. For a certainty James White could inform his readers of the exact time Christ had spent in the two apartments of the heavenly sanctuary. He stated: “His ministry in the holy, from his ascension in the spring of A.D. 31 to the autumn of 1844, was eighteen hundred and thirteen years and six months.”<sup>30</sup>

Another evidence to show how unsuccessful Smith had been to silence the EGW critics—but satisfy SDA members—was another publication against the validity of the visions. The author this time seems to have been even more troublesome than Snook and Brinkerhoff. H. E. Carver by name, he had been a shut-door believer himself after the Disappointment, and had accepted the views of the Sabbatarian Adventists in 1850—1851,<sup>31</sup> in the midst of their traumatic shut-door crisis. In his booklet, *Mrs. E. G. White’s Claims to Divine Inspiration Examined*, he meant to have proven from the original early documents that all Sabbatarian Adventists, including EGW, were indeed shut-door believers in “its extreme sense.”<sup>32</sup>

## 2. The Isaac Wellcome—Miles Grant—A.C. Long Charges 1874—1885

Another high-water mark of criticism was reached in 1874—1883. During this period EGW herself felt obliged to go into the open and defend her course in the old shut-door years, which was a new development. The first critic to open fire was Isaac C. Wellcome, a former Millerite and once a close friend of the Whites. In 1874 Wellcome published a comprehensive and valuable history of the Adventist Revival.<sup>33</sup> In that history Wellcome included some lengthy remarks on the circumstances behind the last part of Miller's revival, the so called Seventh Month movement. Under the caption, The "Shut Door Theory" he related the rise of the shut-door theology and EGW's involvement in that "fanaticism." For this part Wellcome claimed first-hand knowledge, since he had been present when EGW was receiving her trance visions.

He introduced Adventism's talented prophetess in the following way: "It (Turner's shut-door view) was readily accepted by some and was soon confirmed to them and others by visions of one Ellen G. Harmon, who traveled from town to town, where she was strangely exercised in body and mind, usually talking to assemblies until nature was exhausted and then falling to the floor, unless caught by someone sitting near (we remember catching her twice to save her from falling to the floor), remaining a considerable time in a mesmeric state, and afterwards, perhaps not until another meeting, she would relate the wonders which she claimed had been shown her in spirit . . ." <sup>34</sup>

Then Wellcome went on to deliver his story of EGW's early shut-door position: "She claimed to have seen that Christ had left the office of mediation and assumed that of Judge, had closed the door of mercy, and was blotting out the names, from the book of life, of those who had not been faithful up to the tenth day of the seventh month, and of those who had believed that the Lord would come at that time and subsequently confessed they were in error, that their experience was not all of God in thus believing." <sup>35</sup>

Wellcome ended this paragraph in stating that he had seen EGW while in vision "at Poland, Portland, Topsham, and Brunswick." <sup>36</sup> It is true that Wellcome exposed himself as a kind of bitter critic of the competing and growing Sabbatarian Adventists. He even conceded that immediately after the October disappointment he had been baptized by James White, a ceremony he much regretted a few weeks later on. <sup>37</sup> Such circumstances explain at least some of the polemical phrases quoted here. When it comes

to the radical shut-door concept in the Whites, however, other documents show that in principle Wellcome was correct in his report.

In the same year another merciless opponent of the Whites and the SD church, Miles Grant, editor of the *World's Crisis*—a Sunday-keeping, Adventist journal—produced a long critical article against EGW's view on Shut Door in the early visions. Referring to the Book of Hebrews Grant showed that Christ had been a High Priest in the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary since his ascension.<sup>38</sup> In addition to such biblical exegesis Miles Grant had contacted some "reliable witnesses" who could testify from their own experience with young Ellen White that she certainly defended the same shut-door ideas as her senior brethren did. Foremost among those witnesses were Mrs. Burdick and Israel Dammon. Whatever can be said of those "witnesses," Israel Dammon's statements must have carried considerable weight, since EGW herself had admitted that she had had visions in his home and she, moreover, praised Dammon as a man of God. Needless to mention Dammon had been a shut-door brother of the extreme sort.<sup>39</sup>

### **EGW rebuttal**

With such vehement and repeated attacks against her views EGW could keep silent no longer, but had to come out into the open with a rebuttal. This was done in an indirect way, in a letter to J.N. Loughborough, one of the top leaders and a devoted supporter of EGW's visions. Under a kind of oath, or "in the fear of God," she made some statements in reference to Shut Door. Considering the weight of this report, it is reprinted in verbatim: "Battle Creek, Mich. Aug. 24/74.

### **Dear Bro. Loughborough**

I hereby testify in the fear of God that the charges of Miles Grant of Mrs. Burdick and others published in the *Crisis* are not true. The statements in reference to my course in forty-four are false.

With my brethren and sisters after the time passed in forty-four I did believe no more sinners would be converted. And am clear and free to state no one has ever heard me say or has read from my pen statements which will justify them in the charges they have made against me upon this point.

It was on my first journey east to relate my visions that the precious light in regard to the heavenly sanctuary was opened before me and I was

shown the open and shut door. We believed that the Lord was soon to come in the clouds of heaven. I was shown that there was a great work to be done in the world for those who had not had the light and rejected it. Our brethren could not understand this with our faith in the immediate appearing of Christ. Some accused me of saying my Lord delayeth his coming, especially the fanatical ones. I saw that in '44 God had opened a door and no man could shut it and shut a door and no man could open it.<sup>40</sup> Those who rejected the light which was brought to the world by the message of the second angel went into darkness, and how great was that darkness.

I never have stated or written that the world was doomed or damned. I never have under any circumstances used this language to any one however sinful. I have ever had messages of reproof for those who used these harsh expressions.<sup>41</sup>

In several ways the 1874 EGW letter is enigmatic. For one thing the handwritten version reveals some alterations and haste. In fact, the handwritten copy more resembles a draft than an important letter. Regardless of such remarks, the letter might nevertheless be the product of a combined effort of EGW and her main advisors. As to content the letter stands in a glaring contrast to the genuine shut-door documents; the late statement seems to have been an attempt from the side of EGW to harmonize the early shut-door texts with her position in 1874. It is almost pathetic to find her claim that she had "never stated or written that the world was doomed or damned." As to her vision on her "first journey east" we do know from her vision on February 1845 in Israel Dammon's house that she then had seen in vision how "Satan appeared to be by the throne, trying to carry on the work of God, . . ."<sup>42</sup> Thus the early texts go in a diametrically different direction, her first published vision saying that God had rejected "all the wicked world" after 1844.

Undoubtedly 1874 meant a serious escalation of the criticism of EGW as a shut-door visionary during 1845–1851. In fact, these discussions raged on and off with great intensity right down to the death of the prophetess in 1915 and far beyond that date. The key question was the deletions in the early visions and the tendency to suppress the original documents. In order to shut the mouths of the critics as to that charge G.I. Butler, the General Conference President in the first part of the 80s, in 1882 recommended the republication of EGW's *Early Writings*. This book was a combination of *Experience and Views* (1851) and *Spiritual Gifts* vol. I. (1858). By this endeavor, however, Butler made things still worse. For in an article in the church paper he made the incorrect statement that the

reprint contained “the very first of the published writings of Sisters White” and would so meet the longfelt need among the church members who wanted to possess “all she had written for publication.”<sup>44</sup>

Evidently Butler acted too rashly, or might have been ignorant of the basic facts in the history of EGW during the shut-door era. Such remarks may appear to be untenable, but one must nevertheless take account of the heavy denominational coloring of those early years tending to prevent even high officials from getting a factual report of the difficult passage from a closed door to the more open variant.

Whatever might have been the ground for Butler’s failure to present the facts in this controversy, the opponents were not slack to launch another shut-door campaign against the SDA church. Indeed, only a few months after the *Early Writings* was off the presses, a member of the so called Marion-Party, by the name of A.C. Long, had published a critical review of the new EGW book.<sup>45</sup> It was of course easy for Long to prove Butler wrong in his claims as to the *Early Writings*. This book did not contain the original EGW texts. From that statement Long continued to maintain that he even knew the reason why there had been so many omissions in the first EGW booklet, *Experience and Views* of 1851. The Whites had been forced to make those deletions, since the early visions were “deeply colored by the shut-door doctrine.”<sup>46</sup>

### 3. SDA Rebuttals 1883—1885

In the ensuing duelling Butler and J.H. Waggoner did their best to defend the official denominational interpretation of EGW’s early visions in the shut-door era. In the 1883 *Review Supplement* J.H. Waggoner attempted to defend the traditional denominational view in reference to EGW and Shut Door.<sup>47</sup> The editor denied the charge of suppression by stating that the Sabbatarian leaders had never made an “effort to restrict” the circulation of the early EGW publications. “The fact that a publication, or any part of it, is not *republished*, is no evidence of intention to suppress it, as long as no effect is made to recover or to check the circulation and the use of the copies issued,” Waggoner argued.<sup>48</sup> A substantial portion of Waggoner’s rebuttal dealt with other matters than the main issue, EGW and Shut Door. Since Waggoner appears to have been in a difficult position after Long’s criticism, he may have jumped to conclusions that under more normal circumstances might have been avoided. To mention a few examples of such points, Waggoner maintained that as early as 1849 the

Whites had “been laboring for years for all whom they could reach with the message.”<sup>49</sup> The Sabbatarian leaders had, moreover, believed in “the shut door” together with “the great body of Adventists” only “*for a short time after the disappointment.*”<sup>50</sup> It was therefore incorrect to state that EGW and the Sabbatarian leaders had believed in the shut-door view, even in 1845–1851, or whatever year that era might have ended. On the contrary the Whites had confessed their beliefs in “The Open and Shut Door” but never in the exclusive shut-door view. Furthermore Waggoner produced “witnesses,” such as Marion C. Truesdail to confirm his contentions.<sup>51</sup>

Waggoner was undoubtedly correct in stating that the SDA leaders had never required the return of checking of the early EGW documents—a thing which of course would have been futile anyway. On the other hand, however, Waggoner’s article was very disappointing. He refused to deal with the ground for the 1851 omissions in the early visions and he gave an incorrect view of the attitude of the Whites to Shut Door in 1845–1851. The late statements from a few friends to the cause may have impressed those who believed already, but carried little weight before the world.

Of special interest in this connections is EGW’s long reply of A.C. Long’s 16-page criticism in 1883.<sup>52</sup> From the wording of this rebuttal one can feel how much upset EGW was at that time. If her letter to Loughborough in 1874 seems to have been perhaps her own spontaneous reaction, the same thing cannot be said of this 10-page exposition. For the 1883 rebuttal her advisors may very well have contributed in many ways, not least in matters of style and argument. The main points in her long reply can be summed up under a few headings.

1) When the 1882 edition of the *Early Writings* was being published neither EGW, nor the publishers out in California possessed any copy even of the 1851 edition of her *Experience and Views*, why they had “to send to Michigan to borrow a copy” of that volume. In her “incessant travel” EGW “had lost all trace of her first published works.”

2) In an attempt to silence the critics, blaming her for suppressing her works, the prophetess urgently requested people to send her “a copy of any and all of my first views, as published prior to 1851. As a matter of fact she and the SDA leaders were eager to give the readers “every line” of her works.

3) As to the so called “suppression” or the deletions, she had this to say: in the first place she was *not* responsible for any changes in the vision texts, but most likely another Adventist, by the name of Eli Curtis, was to be blamed for those changes, since he had meddled with some of the early

EGW texts. On that point EGW was emphatic: "The articles given in *Early Writings* did pass under my eye; and as the editions of *Experience and View* published in 1851 was the earliest which we possessed, and as we had no knowledge of anything additional in papers or pamphlets of earlier date, I am not responsible for the omissions which are said to exist."

4) Regardless of those statements the prophetess nevertheless proceeded to deal with those "omissions." In her discussion of the omissions EGW commented upon a few of the most common objections against her views, as they had been referred to mainly in A.C. Long's pamphlet. The first objection, to be sure, was the expression in her first printed vision about "all the wicked world which God had rejected." She merely gave a short explanation, saying that what she had in mind was the fate of those who had given up "their faith in the '44 movement."

5) More important was her own explanation of her earliest relation to the shut-door doctrine. In direct contradiction to what she uttered in 1847 she now declared that she had been a firm believer in the notion "that the door of mercy (sic) was then forever closed to the world." This was her position *prior* to her first vision, however. The visions "corrected" her error and enabled her "to see the true position." Then follows a long exposition of shut-door parallels in the Bible, according to EGW's understanding.

6) The rebuttal ended with a strong denunciation of her critics as "last-day scoffers." She burst out: "From the beginning of my work, I have been pursued by hatred, reproach, and falsehood. Base imputations and slanderous reports have been greedily gathered up and widely circulated by the rebellious, the formalist, and the fanatic. There are ministers of the so called orthodox churches traveling from place to place to war against Seventh-day Adventists, and they make Mrs. White their textbook."<sup>53</sup> In the same way as Christ was made the object of hatred and enmity, so it was with EGW, and advocate of Truth in the last days.<sup>54</sup>

7) In order to save "some honest souls" from losing their faith in EGW's prophetic office, she had made an exception and come out into the open to defend her statements.<sup>55</sup>

Several questions crop up when we ponder the statements just reviewed. In the first place it is of course surprising to learn that the Whites had lost "all trace of the first published works." This means that the Whites had got rid of every copy of the *Present Truth*. And yet EGW claimed to have received a special vision from God to encourage her husband to publish that journal! Secondly, it is unconvincing to blame Eli Curtis for the

omissions in 1851, as if he had edited the booklet the Whites recommended to their constituency. On the contrary, one of the conservative Adventist historians had shown that Eli Curtis omitted EGW shut-door expressions before he republished some EGW revelations. This speaks against EGW's version as to her open-door position in 1848.<sup>56</sup> Thirdly, the late EGW statements as to her understanding of Shut Door, do not harmonize with the early contemporary statements. Hence EGW's 1883 explanations give further support to the conclusion that EGW did believe in Shut Door like the rest of the Sabbatarian flock. But just because she was looked upon as a kind of infallible prophet, there was no way for her to confess the great change honestly in her statements regarding Shut Door. Certainly she was much more human than her apologists have admitted. Accordingly, she and the denomination had to live on with the unsolved shut-door problems as with a kind of thorn in the flesh.

If Butler had been very unsuccessful to calm the outcries of the critics in 1882—1883, he made a very ambitious effort in 1885 to remedy those mishaps. This time he penned no less than ten articles for the *Review*.<sup>57</sup> The president who expressed his views as an eloquent *preacher*, began his series by showing the close ties between Miller's apocalyptic time movement and the present SDA church. "If that Advent experience was not of God, this cannot be. If that was a fanatical movement, this must be also," he declared.<sup>58</sup> The main burden of his series was to shut the mouths of the many opponents who claimed that the pioneers of the SDA church in the early years after the Disappointment for some time believed in the unscriptural shut-door doctrines.<sup>59</sup> This time Butler was adamant in his optimism, saying that "we have nothing to fear from the most scrutinizing investigation of early Advent History."<sup>60</sup>

In the fourth installment Butler had arrived at "the Shut Door and Kindred Matters."<sup>61</sup> "Perhaps there has never been anything connected with the Advent movement that our enemies have tried harder to use to our reproach than the shut door doctrine," he averred. The first section of this article renders a realistic picture of the feelings among the Millerites after the Disappointment. This accurate description was not adhered to consistently, however. For example in describing the many futile attempts to determine a new terminus for the Advent. Butler tended to designate those brethren as fanatics or unfaithful believers,<sup>62</sup> overlooking the fact that James White, Hiram Edson and Joseph Bates, the real founders of the SDA church, belonged to the timists. In the sixth item in the series Elder Butler tried to explain how EGW related to the shut-door doctrine.<sup>63</sup> He promised to be completely honest and admit "*all* the truth."<sup>64</sup> Like many

other denominational writers Butler explained the term "shut door" to mean God's rejection of people who had refused to accept the October date as being of salvation-historical significance. Butler agreed that for "a few months" after the October drama, the SDA pioneers believed that "their work for the world was done." Prophecy was fulfilled in October, as he expressed his understanding of the term.<sup>65</sup> Like several other apologists, such as EGW, Butler, too, perhaps unconsciously read the much later interpretation into the October events, namely the "investigative judgement" and the concept of a special ministration of Christ in the Most Holy Place only from October 22, 1844. To Butler "Shut Door" should rather be referred to as the Open and Shut Door. In fact, Scripture proved the Adventists to be correct in this interpretation, he averred.<sup>66</sup>

In the remainder of that series Butler mainly enlarged upon the "open door," or the concept that salvation was always available to the "honest souls."<sup>67</sup> At the same time he admitted that this transition from a shut to an open door was a gradual transition up to 1850 or 1851, when the leaders at last realized that "their future work was to be largely for those outside the old Adventist believers." To Butler, then, Shut Door eventually became the Open Door, or the concept that "prophecy had been fulfilled in October 1844" with far-reaching consequences for mankind. In other words: Christ's alleged ministration in the Most Holy Place to have commenced for the *first* time from October 22, to administer the "final atonement" or open the Great Assize in heaven, became the novel interpretation of the ominous term "shut door." Butler therefore speaks of a "modified" shut door doctrine.<sup>68</sup> Obviously this clearly unhistorical method saved the leaders from ever admitting any unscriptural fallacy, for by this merging of two opposing ideas, the old and the modified shut door views, there was no way of getting at the mistakes. The terms "open and shut door" had become synonyms! To be honest in the fullest sense it would have been demanded from the side of Butler to admit the circumstances that the Sabbatarian leaders of necessity were strong believers in the mercy-limiting concept for years after the disappointment and that they found it very hard to get rid of that concept, not least since EGW had supported that view in her early visions.

In the final items in the series Butler wanted to prove two things:

1) The Sabbatarian Shut-door brethren had certainly limited their religious work mainly to the former Millerites, but they had never been dogmatic about it. There were some exceptions outside the Adventist groups. Basically they consisted of two categories: children to Sabbatarian parents, and "honest" individuals who had not rejected "the Advent

experience” or the reinterpretation of Snow’s October time movement. It was therefore incorrect to claim that no single “sinner” could be converted after the October events.

2) Butler, moreover, contended that those who rejected the apocalyptic October time concept were most likely eternally lost souls.<sup>69</sup>

The documents Butler quoted from, such as the *Review* and the *Present Truth* in 1850—1851, belonged to the transition period between the shut-door and the open-door theology. But yet no reader could help noticing the unscriptural notions even so. Only children and those who had not reached the age of accountability prior to 1844 seem to have had any real chances of being included on Christ’s “breast shield” in the Most Holy of the sanctuary. Most surprising of all in those articles was no doubt the unsatisfactory references to the contemporary documents and Butler’s decision not to discuss the position of EGW. Butler’s contribution was without a doubt the most balanced contribution from the side of the denomination so far. But yet it was very unsatisfactory.

We are now leaving this most intense shut-door debate and conclude our investigation by examining some more recent contributions on the shut-door controversy.

### CHAP. III Notes

1. S. Ingemar Lindén, *Biblicism, Apokalyptik, Utopi*, Diss. Uppsala 1971, pp. 74—84.
2. *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, Wash. D.C. 1966, pp. 770, 771.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid. See also Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* I. p. 177. Mountain View, Calif. 1948.
5. EGW remarks: “I was pointed back to the rise of the advent doctrine, and even before that time, and saw that there had not been a parallel to the deception, misrepresentation, and falsehood that has been practiced by the *Messenger* party, . . .” Ellen G. White, *Test. for the Church*, I. p. 117. Cf. Richard C. Nickels, *A History of the Seventh Day Church of God*, I. pp. 5—14. Aug. 31, 1973. Duplicated.
6. D.E. Robinson, *The Camden Vision*. Duplicated in 1971. WEA. Wash. D.C.
7. Ibid.
8. Nickels op.cit. pp. 12, 13.
9. *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia* (1966) pp. 770, 771.
10. Nickels op.cit. p. 34.
11. Ellen G. White, *Test. to the Church*. I. Mountain View, Calif. 1948, pp. 116, 117. *The Review and Herald*, 1854—1856, passim.
12. Poehler op.cit. pp. 10, 11.
13. Ibid., p. 11.
14. Ibid., p. 12.
15. Ibid.
16. Nickels op.cit. pp. 64—356.
17. *Review and Herald*, Jun. 12—Jul. 31, 1866.
18. Uriah Smith, *The Visions of Mrs. E.G. White, A Manifestation of Spiritual Gifts*

- According to the Scriptures*. Battle Creek, Mich. 1868. Commented J.W. in *the Review*: "While carefully reading the manuscript I felt grateful to God that our people could have this able defense of those views which they so much love and prize, and which others despise and oppose. This hook is designed for very wide circulation." James White in *Review and Herald*, Aug. 25, 1868. Italics added.
19. Uriah Smith, op.cit. p. 20. J.W. in *Review and Herald*, Aug. 25, 1868.
  20. Ibid., p. 21.
  21. Ibid., pp. 23, 24.
  22. Ibid., pp. 27, 28.
  23. Ibid., pp. 33, 34.
  24. Ibid., p. 33.
  25. Ibid., pp. 33, 34.
- Cf. F.D. Nichol 1951, p. 229. Reprint of the *Camden vision* acc. to the Ellen G. White Estate version, in Arthur L. White's 1971 "*Committee of Seven*". Duplicated. WEA. Wash. D.C. In the handwritten remarks on that document Arthur L. White mentions that the Estate also has "handwritten copyings" of the same text. In a postscript to the printed version a certain Russell F. Barton of Waterbury, Vt. mentions that "Eld. J.N. Loughborough, who knew all about this "vision" stated that it is authentic. And so did of course James White and Uriah Smith or else they would have had nothing to do with the vision.
26. Smith op.cit. pp. 33, 34.
  27. Ibid.
  28. James White, *Life Incidents, In Connection with the Great Advent Movement, As Illustrated by the Three Angels of Revelation XIV*. I. Battle Creek, Mich. 1868, p. 186.
  29. Ibid., p. 204.
  30. Ibid., p. 194.
  31. Cf. Poehler op.cit. p. 14.
  32. Ibid.
  33. Isaac C. Wellcome, *History of the Second Advent Message and Mission, Doctrine and People*. Yarmouth, Maine, 1874.
  34. Ibid., p. 397. Italics added.
  35. Ibid., p. 402.
  36. Ibid.
  37. Wellcome op.cit. pp. 403, 404.
  38. *The World's Crisis*, Jul. 1, 1874, p. 50.
  39. Cf. above, pp. 50—52.
  40. In the handwritten copy the wording is the other way round!
  41. *The Review and Herald*, Jan. 14, 1932, p. 7. Under the photographic handwritten text (a facsimile specimen), C.H. Jones, manager of the Pacific Press Publ. Ass. confirms that he ordered this copy. The facsimile copy covers only a portion of the letter. It would, of course, be of a great help to the researchers, if the complete text could be reproduced.
  42. *The Review and Herald*, Jan. 14, 1932, p. 7. Cf. Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, I. Wash. D.C. 1958, p. 74. (Letter 2, 1874.)
  43. *To The Little Remnant Scattered Abroad*. (Broadside) Portland, Maine, Apr. 6, 1846.
  44. *The Review and Herald*, Dec. 26, 1882. Emphasis added.
  45. A.C. Long, *Comparison of the Early Writings of Mrs. White with later Publications*. Marion, Iowa, 1883.
  46. Ibid., p. 8.
  47. *The Review and Herald*, Aug. 14, 1883. A Supplement.
  48. Ibid.
  49. Ibid.
  50. Ibid. Italics in the original.
  51. Ibid.
  52. Manuscript 4, 1883, as reproduced in Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, I Wash. D.C. 1958, pp. 59—73.
  53. Ibid., p. 69.
  54. Ibid.
  55. Ibid.
  56. Ibid.
  57. Cf. *Review and Herald*, Feb. 10, 1885—Apr. 14, 1885.
  58. Ibid., Feb. 10, 1885.

59. *Review and Herald*, Feb. 10, 1885—Apr. 14, 1885.
60. *Ibid.*, Feb. 10, 1885.
61. *Ibid.*, Mar. 3, 1885.
62. *Ibid.*, et Mar. 10, 1885.
63. *Ibid.*, Mar. 17, 1885.
64. *Ibid.* Italics in the original.
65. *Ibid.*
66. *Ibid.*, Mar. 24, 1885.
67. *Ibid.*, Apr. 14, 1885.
68. *Ibid.*, Mar. 24, 1885, Apr. 14, 1885.
69. *Ibid.*, Apr. 14, 1885.

## V. Shut Door from Canright to Poehler

### 1. From D.M. Canright to W.A. Spicer

The 1880s turned out to be a difficult crossing for EGW and the SDA Church.<sup>1</sup> The decade began with a “rebellion” among believers in Iowa. It ended with the most serious attack so far, when one of the pioneers, Dudley M. Canright (1840—1919), came out with his vehement accusations against EGW as a false prophet.<sup>2</sup> In fact, most of the criticisms against EGW down to the present day have emanated from Canright. There is, to be sure, a great deal of value in his observations, and he should not be dismissed without notice, but no serious student of Adventist history can overlook the fact that Canright presented a prejudiced and one-sided story. This is why no scholar today trusts Canright without a thorough check of the primary historical records. Canright’s “charges” have undoubtedly stimulated such in-depth studies.

Regardless of such caveats, however, Canright has exerted considerable influence on Adventist critics as to the understanding of EGW, prior to the epoch, when scholarly presentations were produced by various historians. This is especially true of many Evangelicals in America. Canright’s anti-EGW writings commenced in 1887 in the form of a series of newspaper articles. Those articles in a slightly revised form appeared as a book in 1889.<sup>3</sup> Canright’s final major blast against the SDA Church came in 1919, when he wrote his well-known *Life of Mrs. Ellen G. White*. In the latter publication Canright, basically correctly, stated that EGW like all the SDA pioneers had taught that “the door of mercy was shut in 1844” and that no genuine conversions occurred in the “nominal” churches during that period.<sup>4</sup> It might be objected that Sabbatarian Adventists did not use the very term “door of mercy” much: but such remarks are not significant, since they certainly believed that the chances of salvation had terminated from October 22, 1844. It is also true that Sabbatarian Adventists, including EGW, taught that the alleged conversions in other religious groups were spurious.<sup>5</sup> It would be foolish to deny such facts. So far Canright was in the right, and he had certainly been on the spot of events, as they were being discussed by the leading brethren, such as James White

and Uriah Smith.<sup>6</sup> Canright's glaring weaknesses were of course his fiery polemical attitude and his lack of historical scholarship.

The Adventist reaction on Canright's articles began with a long *RH Extra* in 1887, the same year Canright published his first series of anti-EGW articles in the *Michigan Christian Advocate*. Since Butler had been discussing "The Advent Experience" at great length in 1885,<sup>7</sup> he limited his endeavors this time mainly to a reiteration of those views, attempting to prove Canright wrong by referring to several late pro-EGW "witnesses."<sup>8</sup> Smith, who basically was a Protestant, or a firm sola Scriptura man, did not feel any particular burden this time to go to any great lengths in defending the controversial prophetess. Several years earlier the editor had confided to Canright that he was an Adventist in the first place because of his understanding of Scripture and not because of the visions. If EGW would be proved wrong, which she certainly was in several cases, that would not make him an apostate.<sup>9</sup>

Another attempt to defend EGW and her orthodoxy during the troublesome shut-door years was made by pioneer worker, J.N. Loughborough. In 1892 his first edition of *The Rise and Progress of Seventh-day Adventists* came off the steam press at Battle Creek. In the 1905 revised edition an entire chapter was reserved for the "Shut Door."<sup>10</sup> One has no difficulty in going along with the German Adventist historian in his keen criticism of this chronicle.<sup>11</sup> In fact, it borders on the incredible line to find how Loughborough attempted to turn black into white by blaming the "First-day Adventists" of having taught an extreme shut-door view that Ellen Harmon had rejected in her early visions.<sup>12</sup> Such manipulations account for the die-hard views on this issue among the SDA church.

Before turning to Francis D. Nichol, Adventism's foremost apologist all categories and all times, some attention must be given to the contributions of the two presidents of the General Conference, A.G. Daniells and W.A. Spicer. Daniells served as president in the unprecedented period of 19 years, 1903—1922.<sup>13</sup> Only recently the world got a novel, true-to-life, understanding of Daniells' relation to EGW. For contrary to the traditional view Daniells was much more like Uriah Smith in his more outspoken years and certainly placed EGW in a much different category from the biblical writers. Daniells also saw a great danger in the mythological undergrowth around EGW after her demise. He paid no attention to the "bodily manifestations" during EGW's trance visions and warned the brethren against making her writings the sole expositor of the Bible.<sup>14</sup>

With those concepts in fresh memory it is not so surprising to learn of Daniells' moderate interpretation of EGW during the shut-door years.

According to him EGW certainly believed in Shut Door as an individual, but she had no visions to support that idea., he averred.<sup>15</sup> Poehler has rightly remarked that this conclusion is not very convincing. What EGW thought as an individual must also have colored her visions, however.<sup>16</sup> Most likely there was a special reason for the publication of the *Review* articles in 1930, for at that time Pastor L.R. Conradi, the best known European Adventist leader was, on his way out of the SDA church, mainly because of problems over the official teaching on 1844 and the sanctuary doctrine, as well as to EGW's integrity as an infallible writer.<sup>17</sup>

Spicer did not contribute much to this discussion, however, his most important portion being an unpublished manuscript kept for reference in the files of the General Conference in 1940. Evidently Spicer felt uneasy at Daniells' "moderate" reply to the EGW critics, since he mentioned that Daniells' admission renders "a pitiful picture" of the pioneers which can foster disdain and lacking respect in them. Spicer concluded that the SDA pioneers preached an "open door" for sinners, all the way from 1844.<sup>18</sup> Such utterances show how far from the facts even some top leaders had gone by 1940.

## 2. Nichol-Adventism's Foremost "Defensor Fidei"

The definite rebuttal to practically every major objection in recent times to EGW materialized in 1951 with editor F.D. Nichol's *Ellen G. White and Her Critics*. Few experts would deny Nichol's extraordinary talents as a defensive writer. Like a superb lawyer such as the television star, Perry Mason, he marshalled the "charges" in such a way that EGW always came out victoriously in the end. For a short while his *Critics* may have intimidated most critics inside or outside the Adventist body, but on second thoughts most unbiased readers realized that Nichol through his unique apologetical method had dehumanized EGW and turned her into a person outside the domains of history. Many readers therefore have felt that Nichol's contribution was simply too good to be true.

We shall demonstrate his methodology in regard to his extended treatment of the shut-door question. Nichol reserved at least one fourth of the book only to this "charge."<sup>19</sup> The famous editor begins his investigation with "a sketch of early Adventist history."<sup>20</sup> Referring to some salient points in his impressive best seller, *The Midnight Cry*,<sup>21</sup> Nichol stated that the Millerite movement basically was a sober revival, consisting of gen-

uine Christians aglow with the “long-neglected doctrine of the literal, personal, visible return of our Lord . . .”<sup>22</sup> The outline was continued with an explanation of the rather complex calculations which led Miller and others to expect the parousia about 1844. Here Nichol unflinchingly supported the so called year-day principle for the apocalyptic time periods and had the “seventy weeks” to begin simultaneously with the so called 2300 days in Daniel 8:13—14. Both periods commenced in 457 B.C. according to this Millerite chronology.<sup>23</sup> Nichol never questioned the validity of those interpretations.

We must be alerted all the time when we read *Critics*, however, for there is a consistent defensive stance in this work through and through. For one thing Nichol explained the opposition against Millerites on the ground that “the world would come to a sudden end at the coming of Christ,”<sup>24</sup> when in fact most evangelical Christians did not oppose the parousia as such, but only the proclivity of setting *definitive dates* for what Christ had warned against in the synoptical Gospels. Nichol, moreover, overlooked the ultraistic seeds in the “Seventh-Month movement.”<sup>25</sup>

Quite correctly, however, Nichol maintained that the hard-core believers logically reached the conclusion after the passing of the October time that “their work for the world was done.”<sup>26</sup> Nichol’s presentation of the non-Sabbatarian post-Disappointment history is gloomy in the extreme. Light begins to dawn only when the editor gets into the description of the early SDA pioneers. The layman-preacher, Hiram Edson, who is said to have received a kind of illumination from heaven as to the “true” understanding of Daniel’s 2,300 “evenings-mornings,” plus the acceptance in that little group of the Sabbath (on Saturday) and the prophetic ministry of Mrs. Ellen G. White, completes the setting of the rise of the new denomination.<sup>27</sup>

In his discussion of “shut-door and (the) sanctuary doctrine” Nichol conceded that the Sabbatarian pioneers “believed, for a time, that probation had ended” by October 22. He was quick to remark, however, that this concept of the end of probation for sinners was “really incidental.” In the same setting, however, Nichol had to make the concession that evidently the pioneers after the disappointment “had not yet freed their minds of the idea that probation for the world at large ended in 1844.”<sup>28</sup>

As soon as Nichol attempts to free EGW of every suspicion as to a heretical shut-door view, he immediately parts company with the best historical documents or else gives them an interpretation that is untenable. But here Nichol, like all other shut-door apologists in the SDA church, failed to prove his case, for implicit in his reasoning was the admission

that the early SDA leaders were of “the Sabbath and Shut Door” persuasion, teaching that as from October 22, 1844, prophecy was fulfilled *and* accordingly “probation for sinners had ended.”<sup>29</sup> In order to support his late reinterpretation of Daniel 8, Nichol had to spell out the whole force of the common “rejection theory” from the side of the world in regard to the October events. Those Christians or otherwise who denied every truth in that philosophy, had thereby “willfully rejected light from the Scriptures” and “sinned away their day of grace.”<sup>30</sup> Like most previous denominational writers Nichol believed that Shut Door gradually developed into a less extreme interpretation as the principal Adventist doctrinal “landmarks” were being forged out.<sup>31</sup>

In the following chapter Nichol dealt with EGW and Shut Door.<sup>32</sup> As for a telling start, Nichol felt, he was quoting at length from two of EGW’s late statements in 1874 and 1883.<sup>33</sup> Then he proceeded to analyse several of the early printed EGW statements and interpreted them consistently in the light of the prophetess’ own view.<sup>34</sup> Secondly, by dissolving the critical phrases into the minutest particles and ignoring the context and historical setting the editor could give the shut-door documents a meaning strikingly different from their actual content. This technique is almost unique in Nichol. Only one or two references suffice to demonstrate this method. First of all Nichol never accepted the overwhelming fact that the term “Shut Door” until 1851—1852 always meant two things to the SDA pioneers: 1) October 22 was the correct terminal of the 2,300 “evenings-mornings” in Daniel 8:14. Christ on that day entered into the Most holy place in the heavenly sanctuary for the first time to make “a special atonement” for Israel. In that respect “prophecy had been fulfilled.” 2) The “door” in the parable of Mt. 25:10 was closed to the world and the churches with few exceptions from that same date. This second concept always went along with the first concept until 1851—1852. As we have shown in this study, Nichol makes an exception for EGW and categorically contends, that EGW never in a vision supported this unorthodox view, although all the rest of the hardy pioneers did so. That contention has no other foundation than a preconceived dogmatic supposition, but it is, of course, indispensable for the official infallibility claims for EGW.

The first of our examples as to Nichol’s phenomenal ability to twist the texts to give them a far different intention from what they contained in the original setting can be seen from his long explanation of EGW’s vision on March 24, 1849.<sup>35</sup> The concluding words of that vision reads as we may know: “My accompanying angel bade me look for the travel of soul for sinners as used to be. I looked, but could not see it: *for the time of their*

*salvation is past.*"<sup>36</sup> In his comments of this shut-door view Nichol started out by denying that EGW's reference to the fact that conversions reported to have occurred outside that of "the Little Flock," or the Adventist shut-door group, in any way sustained the idea, that she here supported the common shut-door concept, that "for anyone to be converted would prove that the shut-door theory was wrong."<sup>37</sup> But instead of admitting the plain simple fact that EGW, too, in this supported the important shut-door view, as everybody in that camp saw it, Nichol pays no attention to the hard facts. What is meant, he contends, is a reference to the incipient Spiritualism, beginning about that time at Hydesville, New York.<sup>38</sup> As if he had discussed the text with EGW in person he claims without any hesitation that the "reformations" EGW saw in vision must refer to Spiritism and not to revivals, such as the campaigns of Charles Grandison Finney. This explanation would be plausible only if the description of Spiritualism appeared in the same setting. This is not the case, however. The whole setting describing the satanic work of *ministers*, "who have rejected truth," resembles the February 1845 vision<sup>39</sup> so strikingly, that there is little doubt as to the fact, that EGW even in 1849 still strongly advocated the shut-door view in her visions. The most natural explanation is, of course, that EGW like her Shut Door brethren denied all genuine conversions in the thriving revival movements, even those of Finney. The "truth" those ministers had rejected according to the vision was the so called Present Truth, i.e. the Sabbath and the Shut Door!<sup>40</sup> October 22 according to the interpretation of the SDA pioneers had become a new *conditio sine qua non* for eternal salvation.

Another example of Nichol's tendency to dissolve the text into its minutest details without any respect for its context and historical background it seen in his interpretation of the final phrase, "The time of *their* salvation is past." It is understandable if Nichol was completely callous to the grammatical and contextual setting of this phrase, for it goes without saying that then his whole theory would prove to be untenable. Accordingly, Nichol concluded that "their salvation" did not refer to sinners in general, but to ministers who had "rejected" what EGW saw as truth.<sup>41</sup>

Another example of Nichol's technique to get the desired answers from the early shut-door texts can be seen in his discussion of a portion of EGW's description of Christ's closing transactions in the "Most Holy Place of the Heavenly Sanctuary."<sup>42</sup> In this vision EGW commented upon two references in the Apocalypse, Rev. 7 about the sealing of the 144,000, and the decree, that one day the line shall be drawn irrevocably between

the “filthy” and the “holy” ones, according to Rev. 22:12. Against this solemn perspective EGW envisaged that “soon” the little “remnant” will live without any divine Mediator.<sup>43</sup> In other words: EGW described the pre-Advent tribulation of the last generation.

When Nichol explains this passage he observes a rather different picture, however. This passage is not “speaking of Adventists in general” he suggests in a subtitle.<sup>44</sup> On the contrary, the editor maintains that in this vision EGW had already left the shut-door view of the brethren and embarked upon a kind of open-door theology. Her use of expressions such as “rescue souls from the coming storm of wrath,” Nichol takes in the sense that EGW here employed the “language of evangelistic endeavor.”<sup>45</sup> In order to give further support to his thesis that EGW was far in advance of her slow to comprehend brethren, he joined this piece with the controversial text of the so called Dorchester vision of November, 1848, where EGW in the late 1915 version told her husband to publish a paper, “small at first,” but yet would in the end become “like streams of light that went round the world.”<sup>46</sup> A very doubtful interpretation is thus combined with a very questionable document. The genuine Dorchester vision, as it was written down by the pen of pioneer Hiram Edson told a much different story and unequivocally supported Shut Door in its original double meaning.

The most natural interpretation of the partly quoted *Present Truth* article for September, 1849, actually said exactly the opposite from what Nichol contended. In the first part of that setting EGW reminded the “Little Flock” about the conviction that Jesus was still a merciful High Priest in the Most Holy Place—for the shut-door brethren. She emphatically writes that Jesus “will now accept *our sacrifices, our prayers and our confessions of faults and sins.*” The setting ends with the statement that Jesus will “pardon all the transgressions of *Israel*, that they (sic) may be blotted out before he leaves the Sanctuary.”<sup>47</sup> The term “Israel” does not refer to the Christians in general, but exclusively to the shut-door people and those few who accepted their “present truth” from among the Millerites. At the very end of the long shut-door period a very limited number of other Christians, who also accepted their “present truth” could be included into that privileged “remnant.” The problem Nichol is having with the hopeless “filthy” group, or the ungodly, is actually no problem at all, as EGW here included “all the wicked world which God had rejected” to quote a well-known phrase in her first published vision.

To sum up we could make the following observation as to Nichol’s extended attempt to free EGW from the common shut-door “charge.”

1) Nichol certainly knew the full range of the problem; he had access to all the documents, released as well as unreleased sources. Deliberately he chose not to give the full story, not to open up the vaults and let all the documents speak out.

2) The editor also failed to give a true to life picture of the historical setting of EGW's role as to Shut Door. The contextual setting is missing in reference to EGW and Joseph Turner or Israel Dammon.

3) In his interpretation of "James White . . . laboring for sinners" <sup>48</sup> he overlooked or left out some documents showing that Mr. White on theological grounds refused to work for Christians in other churches as their chances of salvation were forever gone. What is this if not a direct falsification of the facts?

4) There is no relevance whatever for Nichol's "Bible . . . Parallel to Adventist Experience."<sup>49</sup> On the contrary, the Bible, if consulted in an unbiased way or normal way, would have shattered those concepts.

5) Nichol's primary objective was to defend the traditional "mythological" image of EGW, as it had been established in the Ellen G. White Estate over the years. It was, therefore, most important to defend that view at any cost, as any change from the legendary view to that of the real historical EGW might cause something amounting to a revolution in Adventist thinking.

### 3. LeRoy Edwin Froom—Arthur L. White

Our next major Adventist historian to try his hand at the shut-door issue was LeRoy Edwin Froom, Adventism's best known writer on the history of apocalyptic interpretation in the world. Froom's four volume classic, *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers* (1946—1954) was sent as a donation to practically every theological seminary of any repute in the world. As much as one should praise his unsurpassed diligence and competence in collecting this impressive mass of prizeless documents, one must regret his superficial and unconvincing treatment of the important shut-door problem in vol. 4 of his *Prophetic Faith*. For Froom evidently did nothing else than repeat the key note of Nichol's previous more extensive study. *Prophetic Faith*, as well as Froom's bulky *Movement of Destiny* (1971),<sup>50</sup> was badly marred by its undeniable apologetical method. Whereas the non-Sabbatarian representatives on the shut-door division were "extremists," no such derogatory designations were reserved for the Sabbatarian

"moderates."<sup>51</sup> Froom simply refused to do any thorough research on this crucial problem.

Poehler is disappointed and puzzled as to Froom's meagre contribution to the shut-door debate.<sup>52</sup> The mystery surrounding his view as to the old problem vanishes completely, however, when we know Froom's mind on this question. Already in the summer of 1967 this writer had the opportunity to question Froom in reference to Shut Door. In his characteristic august air he solemnly warned me not to have anything to do with EGW's relation to Shut Door during the early formative years! Evidently Froom knew very well that the primary documents did not support the official denominational teaching in this question. On that score silence was cloquence. The great Adventist scholar with his unique command of all the historical documents most likely realized, that every effort to defend EGW's shut-door teachings as different in kind from that of the Sabbatarian Fathers, was bound to be a disappointment. Only fools "rush in where angels fear to tread" so to speak.

Members of the Estate, however, have never seen any light in Froom's position. The most profligate and fluent writer on Shut Door in that department has been the famous Secretary, Arthur L. White. For our purpose it suffices to limit the discussion to Elder White's contribution only after 1971, when the shut-door debate was renewed after the publication of the present author's dissertation. Elder White's comments can be studied in two communications: 1) a duplicated letter, *Concerning the Linden Dissertation*, dated Oct. 21, 1971, and 2) likewise a duplicated 60 page document, *Ellen G. White and the Shut Door Question*, dated Nov. 10, 1971. The more extensive essay will be included as an appendix in the forthcoming biography of Ellen G. White.<sup>53</sup>

As one could expect in a writer in the White Estate, only conclusions that support the traditional view were welcome. In the first document Elder White conceded, that "on the surface" suggestions intimating that EGW shared the unorthodox shut-door view of her brethren, seem "plausible." In his answer to my "charge," however, Elder White immediately explained why any suggestion of that sort was unthinkable and out of the question. A priori Elder White dismissed the thought that "Mrs. White was influenced" in her visions by outside sources. To draw such conclusions would mean to call "her integrity" into question.<sup>54</sup> The only acceptable interpretation of the EGW visions is to accept everything of that kind as correct as "a result of the moving of the Holy Spirit." Hence, whether we are dealing with the first or the last vision, does not make any difference. The visions *in toto* must be correct or infallible. No "heresy" emanates

from God. That is "the crux of the matter," Elder White states.<sup>55</sup> The visions are always dependable, but Ellen White as a person was not infallible.

With such absolute claims for the prophet by Elder White, it comes as no surprise that he could not accept this writer's interpretation of the EGW documents. It was of great concern to Elder White that the readers of *Biblicism*, *Apokalyptik*, *Utopi* did not have access to *Selected Messages*, (Book I, 1958) where the *late* EGW shut-door statements can be read.<sup>56</sup> For in the view of Arthur White the prophetess herself was best fitted to explain her position "in this sensitive area of shut door."<sup>57</sup> To arrive at a different conclusion must amount to nothing less than questioning the Holy Spirit that had inspired the visions and EGW statements. If so, there is, of course, no room for any research worthy of the name.

A considerable extent of the first Arthur L. White document was devoted to the problem of the deletions in the first EGW booklet, *Experience and Views* of 1851. Whereas Elder White correctly had demonstrated how EGW in her letter to close friends, the Dodges, in the summer of 1851 had mentioned the appearance of this booklet, he was less successful in his attempts to account for the criticism of the young prophetess at that time.<sup>58</sup> For according to Elder White the criticism came "from outside the ranks of the Sabbath-keeping Adventists." The career of Joseph Smith and the Mormons was referred to, as well as "outbreaks of fanaticism in the Millerite movement."<sup>59</sup> The contemporary document prove beyond any doubt, however, that there were considerable criticism against EGW among her own group, not least after 1851.<sup>60</sup>

Elder White's second contribution does not differ in kind very much from the personal letter, sent to this writer; the only difference being its length and the omission of personal notes to this writer. Elder White commenced the second installment in a somewhat solemn style, comparing the early difficult pioneer years in the annals of the Adventist Church with those of the disappointed disciples after the crucifixion of Jesus.<sup>61</sup> To be sure there was a definite period of time in the early post-disappointment years, when the pioneers, excluding the visions of the prophetess, taught that "probation for the world generally or for certain classes of people had closed." The documents of the time clearly teach that, Elder White went on. "What might be termed the "shut door era" in our history extended from 1851 or 1852," the Secretary correctly writes.<sup>62</sup>

From that admission Elder White goes on to formulate his thesis: "Was Ellen G. White shown in vision that the door was shut and consequently

probation for the world was closed?"<sup>63</sup> In order to tackle his presupposition that EGW never in a vision supported the erroneous shut-door notion Elder White listed four points as his statement of faith rather than a scholarly hypothesis to be tested against the facts. Those four points in Elder Whites Credo were: 1) "That the great Advent awakening of the early 1840's was a movement of God's providence, marked by the work of the Holy Spirit. 2) That Ellen Harmon White was chosen by God as His messenger and her work embodied that of a prophet. She served in this prophetic office from 1844 until 1915. 3) "*That as a sincere, dedicated Christian and a prophet, Ellen White would not and did not falsify.* Therefore, we may accept her statement on their face value. Her witness, then, relating to the experience of 1844—1851 may be accepted as presenting a true picture of conditions, of positions taken, and work done. 4) Likewise the witness of those who passed through the experience of 1844 as fellow-believers with Ellen White may be accepted as true and correct to the best of the memory of the individuals who reported."<sup>64</sup>

With this presentation of his confession in the absolute certainty of Ellen White, the son-son of the prophet went on to his assignment. Needless to mention this approach to the problem with such heavy *a priori* presuppositions excluded every claim to a factual unprejudiced treatment of the problem. It is also significant that Arthur White was referring to F.D. Nichol and his 1951 book as an authority on the topic.<sup>65</sup> Such methodology and prejudices, of course, do not come as a surprise, when members of the Estate explain the controversial topic. As we shall see, Arthur White wrote very much in the traditional vein. As was the case in his "personal" letter to this writer, he made Ellen G. White her own judge as to her meaning of Shut Door. The late EGW statements settled the discussion in her favor once and for all.<sup>66</sup>

Then follows a most promising section, entitled "The E.G. White Statements in Their Historical Context."<sup>67</sup> The student who expected a thorough investigation of the historical context, however, was bound to be badly disappointed. There is nothing at all here to demonstrate how the Adventist pioneers, including EGW, received their notion as to Shut Door from men such as Joseph Turner, Israel Dammon, or Apollos Hale and Samuel S. Snow. On the contrary, Arthur L. White cites the *late* EGW, where there is a modified and unhistorical explanation as to Shut Door. The Secretary does not even refer to the term itself, but prefers the late apologetical term, "the open and shut door," as the prophetess expressed the position about thirty years after the event.<sup>68</sup> The presentation of the so called "historical context" actually went from bad to worse, when Arthur L. White quoted

late second hand “witnesses,” such as Mrs. Truesdail in a letter of August 17, 1875, to support the novel interpretation of the late EGW.

The same untenable reasoning and *partial* presentation of the available documents is continued in the remaining portions, where the Secretary attempts to prove how even James White had become enlightened into the direction of an open door about 1848.<sup>69</sup> Here one notices two major weaknesses: 1) in the first place Elder White did not refer to the paragraphs in the genuine James White letters pertaining to 1848, where James White in a very lucid way stated that the time of probation had for ever closed against the churches; 2) secondly, he preferred the late 1915 version in EGW’s biographical sketch to the contemporary genuine Hiram Edson handwritten version in order to find some faint support for his apologetical theory that already in the 1848 shut-door period EGW supported a kind of open-door theology.<sup>70</sup> But not least the available Hiram Edson text reveals the truth as to EGW and Shut Door in 1848—1849. Of that version we get nothing in Arthur L. White’s presentation.

The modifications as to meaning of Shut Door at the end of the period 1845—1851 are mentioned as a kind of novel observation.<sup>71</sup> But as a matter of course there could not be otherwise in the transition period from Shut Door to the orthodox Open Door position. Such remarks are therefore very trivial. It is also quite obvious that the heretical view of Shut Door—in fact every connotation was out of tune with the evangelical teachings—to a certain extent depended on pragmatistical reasons. It was simply a fact, that for a long time after the October time fiasco hardly anybody would lend an ear to the “deluded Millerites.”<sup>72</sup> Arthur L. White correctly maintains that this major change occurred about 1851.<sup>73</sup> For this reason it is not correct to state that “the visions led them (the Sabbatarian Adventists) out of the extreme view of the shut door,” as J.N. Loughborough suggested in 1866.<sup>74</sup> Not the visions, but the attitude of some American Christians caused the Sabbatarian Adventists to realize that the “door of access” to salvation may after all still be open, although the visions had taught otherwise for a long time.

But at the end of his essay Elder White makes the unwarranted conclusion, that nowhere in any published or unpublished EGW document can we find any support for the concept that “probation for the world had closed in 1844.”<sup>75</sup> And as evidence for this view Arthur White refers to the late EGW.<sup>76</sup>

At the end of his 60 page essay Elder White had great difficulty in explaining the many deletions in the first EGW booklet, *Experience and Views* of 1851. He attempts to prove that there was no questioning or

discussion as to the omissions in the original text in 1851—1855, but only much later, in 1882 and beyond that date, did the “charges” begin.<sup>77</sup> But as we have found in this study, the objections and “charges” against EGW on the ground of the alterations in the original visions followed the Whites as a shadow all the time.<sup>78</sup> An EGW letter from the time the booklet was in the printing process well reveals the real opposition and the anxiety from the side of the prophetess.<sup>79</sup> The general suspicion from the side of the Sabbatarian Adventists against any visionary material during 1851—1855 support the same position.<sup>80</sup> It is finally of some significance that Elder White himself indirectly had to make great concessions to the same end. 1) He had to state that the original visionary text was incapable of conveying EGW’s interpretation of the October events in 1851, and 2) that she had to avoid “inclusion in permanent publications of phrases which could be, and probably by some were being misinterpreted.” In other words, there was undoubtedly considerable discussion in the Little Flock as to EGW’s teaching in her early visions. Everybody could comprehend the fact that the new theology from the heterodox shut-door notion into the open-door theology must of necessity lead to changes in the early shut-door visions. This is the only dependable explanation for the omissions of the most offensive shut-door terms. After so many years of unsuccessful apologetical writing even the EGW Estate must realize that there is no other choice available then humbly admitting those facts?

The Secretary of the Ellen G. White Estate continued in the traditional line to present EGW as the only great exception during the shut-door period 1845—1851. This is not in any way surprising, since not least Nichol already in 1851 had paved the way for this super-apologetical genre. But still there are some promising indications in a different direction. Today there are some Adventists scholars who dare express their minds in a more factual way even for EGW. This is a novel development, when Adventist theologians and historians reject the formerly so uniform apologetical tendency.<sup>81</sup>

#### 4. Damsteegt—Poehler

There remains now only to examine two more works in reference to Shut Door and the Post-Disappointment events, namely P. Gerard Damsteegt’s dissertation, *Foundations of the Seventh-day Adventist Message and Mission*, Grand Rapids, Mich. 1977, and Rolf Poehler’s unpublished essay already referred to in this study. Damsteegt’s dissertation cannot be ig-

nored in any discussion of the early pioneer years, especially in the field of Adventist missiology. The author who is a conservative Seventh-day Adventist of Dutch descent has made a very thorough work, insofar as the examination of all available primary source material is concerned. The study is in fact a very *detailed* description of a development the author deems to be essential; indeed, it is so rich in details that there is in many places a direct risk that the reader loses touch with the significant factors and gets lost in the uncleaned jungle of endless trees. Damsteegt's study would have been much more lucid and significant, if the writer had structured the main elements better and explained the real causes more clearly.

But again the trained reader has all the sources at his command, provided he has access to the reported documents, especially when the exhibits tell a different story from what the author wanted them to say. Secondly, it is surprising to find how a modern historian could discuss the Post-Disappointment years, as if this dramatic development had taken place almost on an uninhabited island. Finally, there is an unmistakably confessional or apologetical tendency in the whole work, so powerful that it determined the interpretation of the shut-door story or any other Adventist doctrine in an *a priori* way. Again on the positive side there is definitely a great deal to say. Damsteegt without a question is the first writer who could so identify himself with the primitive pioneering thinking in the troublesome shut-door years that he acted almost like one of them! This approach has great advantages when it comes to the question of writing a sensitive narrative of the peculiar pioneer thinking.

Damsteegt might very well have succeeded fully in this ambitious aims, had it not been for his confessional mind, or mainly EGW whom he gave free reins to express her unhistorical interpretations as to her position to Shut Door in 1845—1851, or 1849, as Damsteegt wanted to divide the line between the shut and the open door theology within the Seventh-day Adventist church fathers.<sup>82</sup>

In the first place Damsteegt altered the *termini* of the shut-door period from 1851—1852, as all previous Adventist writers of any repute have argued and decided for 1849 as the end of this troublesome period. The problem here, however, is that Damsteegt cannot refer to any plausible argumentation supporting this suggestion. For there is no basis whatever for Damsteegt rosy picture of any gospel work by Sabbatarian Adventist pioneers in 1849; nor do we find anything of that sort in EGW's 1849 revelations.<sup>83</sup> Also, there is no theological foundation for Damsteegt's thesis that Crosier's crude presentation of the October Disappointment

could mean any "new dimensions in soteriology."<sup>84</sup> So the frustrated and ultraistic pioneers felt, but the New Testament points in another directions as every enlightened theologian knows. On the contrary, the so called new dimensions in soteriology in reference to the so called Pre-Advent Judgment has proven to be wishful concepts in clear opposition to orthodox Christian thinking. And more and more thinking Adventist writers have also realized this fact.<sup>85</sup>

Shut Door according to Damsteege can be summed up under a few headings:

1) At the outset, Damsteege attempts to give an impartial analysis of the Millerite interpretation of the October 1844 time fiasco. The key question, according to Damsteege's portrait, was how to "vindicate the Seventh Month movement."<sup>86</sup> No one would raise objections to this proposal, provided the primary documents pertaining to this period got a fair chance to speak for themselves. One must object to unhistorical, confessional views, however. Thus Damsteege contends, that "Sabbatarian Adventists had a future mission to non-Adventists who had not yet rejected the doctrine of the imminent Second Advent."<sup>87</sup> But this was not the issue in those years, when most Christians adhered to a kind of fundamentalist view of the Bible. Few Christians objected to the concept of an imminent Second Coming, or the sudden approach of the Millennium. But they did reject the whole idea as to any event of historical-salvation importance in 1844. That date was of no consequence insofar as salvation is concerned, they argued, since the atonement was *completed* on the cross. Few evangelicals, therefore, paid any attention to the Sabbatarian pioneers, since they did not believe in the once for all completed sacrifice on Calvary, contending that October 22, 1844, was a *conditio sine qua non* for salvation.

2) Likewise, the Evangelicals in the United States rejected the view of Christ's having entered the Most Holy Place in the heavenly sanctuary, for the *first* time on October 22, 1844, as O.R.L. Crosier and EGW stated. For Orthodox Christians uniformly believed that Christ entered into the Most Holy already at this Ascension, as they could read in the Book of Hebrews.<sup>88</sup> We miss such fundamental remarks in Damsteege.

3) When Damsteege goes on to define the meaning of "shut door," as the radical Millerites saw it, he correctly states, that "for a short period of time" after the Disappointment "nearly all Adventists" i.e. those who took part in Miller's final united Seventh Month movement<sup>89</sup> did believe, that "the door of mercy" had closed against the churches and the world forever as from October 22, 1844, or on the 10th day of the seventh month as the

radical shut-door brethren preferred to express the same date. It is to be regretted, however, how Damsteegt against all facts could go on to claim that this view, which "brought nearly all missionary efforts of Adventists among non-Adventists to a complete stop," only referred to fanatics outside the realm of the "sound" Adventist Fathers.<sup>90</sup> For Damsteegt certainly spoiled his chances of arriving at a realistic and correct view of Shut Door among EGW and the other Sabbatarians, when he reserved the negative "extreme" shut-door concept<sup>91</sup> for those only who moved outside of the Sabbatarian camp.

4) Damsteegt also overdid the meaning of Shut Door, when he made a great deal of the various shut door views, in order to establish his conclusion, that there were so many contrasting or differing meanings of Shut Door, that the term could mean almost anything. Such methods have been employed by most Adventist apologists without any consequence, just because the facts show that the slight variations of the term carried little consequence, since they were basically closely related. Some believed that the atonement had *ended* on October 22, 1844, others that Christ's ministry to the world and the fallen churches' had ended on the same day, albeit this ministry for the Little Flock continued. Whatever view they took as to the atonement they were all *united* in the view that the gospel should no longer be preached to churches or to the "wicked world." The only thing to do was to work for one's own salvation. So taught also Joseph Bates, Hiram Edson, James and Ellen White to mention the most prominent among the sabbatarian pioneers.<sup>92</sup>

5) Damsteegt tried hard to prove how some shut-door believers were so evangelical as to rejoice at the salvation of genuine "sinners" who were baptized in 1845. This report was part of the published letters in Enoch Jacobs' Day-Star paper. But such reports mean no puzzling problems, when we recall that *The Day-Star* was an open magazine where both open- and shut-door believers could express their views!

6) As one could expect Damsteegt was bound to run into great difficulties, when he attempted to get support for his apologetical interpretation of the early texts from 1844—1851. Hence, in places, Damsteegt's argumentation becomes unwittingly or unwillingly almost humoristic in the eyes of a knowledgeable reader, for instance Damsteegt sees important "missiological aspects" in Ellen Harmon's downright shut-door visions of 1844—1852.<sup>93</sup> The February 1845 vision is said to have included "both open- and shut-door implications." However, when Damsteegt explains his reasons for that remarkable suggestion, he finds none in the contemporary source, but has to refer to an opportunistic and arbitrary interpre-

tation by EGW in 1874.<sup>94</sup> The only true interpretation of this February 1845 vision is simply to follow the text as it reads, stating, that "acceptance of this view led various Adventists to conclude that the door of Mt. 25:10 had also been shut."<sup>95</sup> As shown above,<sup>96</sup> EGW's February vision, a summary of Turner's Bridegroom theory, must be considered one of EGW's most uninhibited shut-door visions.

Again, when Damsteegt attempted to explain how an early supporter of Miss Ellen Harmon, Eli Curtis, related to her early visions, he certainly left his readers in perfect confusion. Damsteegt correctly stated that Eli Curtis "omitted EGW's shut-door statement," when he reprinted the first two visions of December 1844, and that one of February 1845. He did so, Damsteegt suggests, because he did not want any reader to be misled, to find support for any "extreme shut-door concept."<sup>97</sup> But we know for certain that EGW resented Eli Curtis open-door position and would have nothing to do with him, apparently, mainly because he had *rejected* the shut-door view she and all the other Sabbatarian Adventists held on to so adamantly, as an important ingredient in their "present truth."<sup>98</sup>

By consistently applying his unhistorical interpretation of Shut Door Damsteegt for one thing saw an early Canright in the most loyal early and devoted pioneer, Otis Nichols.<sup>99</sup> No wonder Damsteegt was puzzled to notice how persistently James White held on to his shut-door idea, despite the allegedly "progressive" shut-door view of his consort, or a shut-door view, actually identical with the missiological open-door position.<sup>100</sup> But, in fact, there was no tension or conflict in reference to Shut Door between any of the Sabbatarian pioneers, and the Whites both hailed Shut Door as the Gospel or Present Truth in those years.

7) Most likely on purpose did Damsteegt refrain from portraying the important historical connexions between EGW and the shut-door fathers. No sophisticated thinking is required in order to comprehend how devastating such a portrayal would have been in a study, where EGW had to come out as the only splendid exception.

Damsteegt certainly made a real achievement in his most diligent search for all the extant document for his study. He has also presented to the world a fine interpretation of the foundations of Sabbatarian Adventism, when viewed through the eyes of the Adventist Fathers. He went astray in certain fields, in regard to Shut Door and for example as to the origin of Adventist health ideas.

The most significant study of Shut Door in recent years is no doubt Rolf J. Poehler's unpublished thesis, . . . *And the Door was Shut*. (Seventh-day Adventists and the Shut-Door Doctrine in the Decade After the Great

Disappointment. Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan. Feb. 1978. (160 pp. + bibliography) Duplicated.)

Poehler divided his tentative essay into four parts: 1) A definition of the character of this work, "The Problem of the Shut Door. 2) The Origin and Early Development of the Shut-Door Doctrine, 3) The Sabbatarian Adventists and the Shut Door Doctrine, 4) Ellen G. White and the Doctrine of the Open and Shut Door."

Under the first chapter Poehler worked hard to arrive at a more workable methodology than found in the previous studies. Stated Poehler: "It is, therefore, of crucial importance that any historical research be preceded by a careful consideration and selection of *presuppositions*."<sup>101</sup> Then Poehler took a good look at the methods used by the previous writers in this controversial field: he stopped to examine the presuppositions of the many apologists, of the polemical installments and so forth.<sup>102</sup> Against the apologists, claiming that EGW's early visions dealt with "future events," Poehler maintained that instead the writers should have shown "historically what she actually did mean by them (the statements)."<sup>103</sup> Under this heading Poehler parted company with well-known apologists, such as Uriah Smith, Joseph H. Waggoner, George Butler, and J.N. Loughborough, who belonged "among the worst example of SDA apologetics."<sup>104</sup> But Poehler went on to brand also more recent Adventist writers as poor writers, insofar as methodology is concerned. Here the old timers received a somewhat rough treatment. Olsen's 1925 denominational history is said to have been "very inaccurate and superficial" as to Shut Door.<sup>105</sup> And still worse fared W.A. Spicer, General Conference president after A.G. Daniells, 1922—1930. Of him as a historian Poehler remarks: "But the culmination of an apologetic misrepresentation of the thought and activities of the SDA pioneers during the shut-door period occurred with Spicer."<sup>106</sup> It is, indeed, gratifying to study Poehler's criticism, when he exposed the "almost mythological view of early Adventist history" in Adventist apologists, "in direct opposition to the plain historical facts."<sup>107</sup> Poehler must also be lauded for his exposure of later writers like A.G. Daniells, F.D. Nichol's and Arthur L. White. Against Daniells, by and large a more careful writer, Poehler held that Daniells' separation between EGW's "revelations" and her "personal belief" in the "final analysis" is untenable.<sup>108</sup>

In this connection Poehler referred to the present writer's criticism of Nichol's method. Incidentally the dissertation, *Biblicism, Apokalyptik, Utopi*, is said to have been a major reason for Poehler's undertaking of his contribution!<sup>109</sup> Poehler sided with the views in my dissertation as to

Nichol's neglect of "some important documents."<sup>110</sup> Of Nichol's methodology he remarked inter alia: "Nichol is a master of refuting troublesome interpretations of documents by dissolving them into minute particles which—being thus removed from their historical context and literary setting—can be made to mean more than one thing; he then chooses that meaning which supports his viewpoint and creates out of these pieces a new picture which is free from all unpleasant elements. Yet in this process of reinterpreting documents (and "remaking" history) he lacks the feeling for and insight into the coherence of historical events which is an indispensable prerequisite for responsible history-writing."<sup>111</sup> This criticism of the apologetical method is so important that it deserves being written in golden letters. Of the prestigious long time Secretary, Arthur L. White and Shut Door, Poehler remarks, that "a careful historical investigation of the problem has actually become superfluous, if not impossible," if White's presuppositions are to determine the case.<sup>112</sup> And undoubtedly Arthur White's "predetermined conclusions" exclude every chance of writing a scholarly work on Ellen G. White and Shut Door. It is only to be regretted in this connection that the most recent works on Adventist history still refer to Nichol and Arthur L. White as authorities in this field.<sup>113</sup>

Poehler's criticism of Damsteegt agrees in many points with what this writer has stated in book reviews and otherwise.<sup>114</sup> The German scholar correctly concluded that Damsteegt came into a sharp conflict with the historical documents and their historical "Sitz im Leben" in giving "a more or less inaccurate picture of E. Jacobs, J.D. Pickands, O.R.L. Crosier, and EGW."<sup>115</sup> And the most "disappointing elements" were his distinction between the "extreme and the less-than-extreme shut door view."<sup>116</sup> Finally, Poehler noted that Damsteegt in his evaluation and conclusions was not "free from apologetical interests."<sup>117</sup> No objections can be raised against this criticism. One concluding remark by Poehler in this connection deserves space. We quote: "His underlying *apologetical orientation* also causes him to present the issue of the "time of trouble" in an inaccurate and misleading manner by making EGW oppose an opinion held by Bates *which he, in fact, had derived from one of her visions*."<sup>118</sup>

Then Poehler turned to the other side of the coin to scold those he preferred to style as the "critics" of the faulty Adventist apologists from Canright to my 1971 treatment of EGW and Shut Door, as he preferred to interpret the installment.<sup>119</sup> Above all, Poehler saw a great weakness in overlooking October 22 as an important "event of salvation-historical significance," the part of the shut-door theology "which has never been abandoned by SDA."<sup>120</sup> Poehler also contended that this writer in 1971 did

not make any "serious effort towards understanding EGW's *later* statements."<sup>121</sup>

After this criticism of all works on Shut Door produced so far, Poehler set his hand to explain how the ideal methodology should be phrased. Under six headings he expressed this method; most of those points are very axiomatic or self-evident points. In short he set up as his objectives to 1) go "ad fontes" and make use of "all relevant primary source material;" 2) to give the *contemporary* sources "more weight than the non-contemporary ones;" 3) in case the early material can be interpreted in more than one way, then "the later sources must not be neglected and may be of deep significance;" 4) the importance of the historical context and the milieu the pioneers moved in; 5) a careful study of the literary setting of the documents; and a document must be interpreted in relationship to other documents by the same author written about the same time; 6) refrain from using inappropriate presuppositions. Referring to a book review by this writer in the *Spectrum*, Poehler made a solemn confession to pave the way for "an objective history of the Adventist church."<sup>122</sup>

Point three is questionable, but understandable in a denominational writer.

With that thorough background criticism one is of course aglow with a great expectation to read Poehler's "most scrutinizing investigation of the shut-door issue," as his seventh point promises.<sup>123</sup> Poehler's second chapter deals with the "origin and development of the shut-door doctrine."<sup>124</sup> The writer correctly affirms old views that the shut-door concept "was established among Adventists long before October 22, 1844." For practical reasons he also saw two, not three major divisions among Millerites after the disappointment.<sup>125</sup> This division into the two camps, "open-door" and "shut-door" believers, this writer had established already in 1971, whereas Adventist writers usually divided them into three groups: 1) open-door adventists, 2) shut-door believers of the "spiritualizing" sort, with an "extreme shut-door view," 3) and the literalist group with a "moderate," Scriptural shut-door concept.<sup>126</sup> Poehler, moreover, followed this writer in portraying Joseph Turner as a key person in the development of the shut-door view.<sup>127</sup> In this connection Poehler rightly mentioned that as a result of his restudy of the primary source documents, he had arrived at the conclusion that the concept of "a closed door of access" was not necessarily less "extreme" than was Turner's "door of mercy" view.<sup>128</sup> He concluded, that the "opposition of the SDA pioneers to the term "door of mercy" does not, therefore, constitute proof that they rejected the "fanatical" view of the shut door."<sup>129</sup> Such remarks are certainly helpful and tend

to drive the old mist in well-known apologist writing from the ground.

Poehler's contention that the Sabbatarian pioneers held on to a "moderate" shut-door view, is, of course, an evaluation in harmony with traditional Adventist *defensive* writing, but is very unconvincing. For it goes without saying, that any shut-door view must be regarded as a bizarre view, insofar as the orthodox Gospel teaching is concerned and therefore more or less fanatical.

A few words only about Poehler's discussion of Shut Door and the Sabbatarian pioneers. His periodical schema is untenable, for influenced by Damsteegt he styled the years 1849—1851 as the period of "missiological awakening."<sup>130</sup> The contention to name the Sabbatarian position as to Shut Door and the heavenly sanctuary the "literal" interpretation is also of dubious material. Even Crosier's reinterpretation of the October events can be seen as a typical *spiritualizing* interpretation of the postponed parousia. Like many other writers on Shut Door, Poehler concluded that "the SDA pioneers were firm adherents of Turner's Bridegroom theory which denied the possibility of true conversions on the part of sinners."<sup>131</sup> Moreover, he arrived at the conclusion that the SDA fathers did so until 1851—1852.<sup>132</sup> Poehler also misunderstood the term "scattering" and "the gathering time."<sup>133</sup> The final phrase according to a thorough investigation of the primary sources referred to the final "gathering" of the "Little Flock" into heaven at the Second Coming, whereas the "scattering" of course meant the shattering of the once united Millerite movement after the Great Disappointment. Against this context it would be a major error to see a significant mission endeavor in the "gathering call." It is of some significance in this connexion to note Poehler's comment on James White's cautions in 1851—1852 and so on in not explaining very much in regard to his major shift in theology from the "old concept" into that of the open-door understanding. Poehler regrets this hesitation from the side of the Sabbatarian editor.<sup>134</sup>

There is much to benefit from in Poehler's fresh analysis of an old problem. However, there are also arguments that seem to be unnecessarily complex and unwarranted. One of those arguments discusses to what extent Seventh-day Adventists apply the rejection theory to the post-disappointment ex-Millerites. In other words: to what extent could Christians who repudiated Snow's and Miller's time calculations for the parousia nevertheless be eligible to eternal salvation? In the first place, of course, only God can decide such cases, and, secondly, from a New Testament point of view the faithful Christians who rejected the false time movement acted in complete harmony with the Gospel not to set any fixed

*termini* for the Last Day. For that reason Poehler's discussion on that score had better be left out completely.<sup>135</sup>

The crucial chapter in Poehler's study deals with EGW and Shut Door.<sup>136</sup> In this section the reader notices a different approach from what he has seen in the previous chapters. Already from the beginning one finds a characteristic "both-and" attitude or a kind of double standing in the verdicts of the writer. Thus on the one hand EGW was "a child of her time" and shared many limitations of her senior brethren, on the other hand she differed from them in being "far ahead of her age."<sup>137</sup> EGW was not at all "time-conditioned," but merely "time-related."<sup>138</sup> Such definitions certainly belong to the more sophisticated *defensive* writers. Poehler explains: "For, right from the beginning (of the shut-door period), her statements contained elements of surprising far-sightedness which repeatedly caught her fellow believers by surprise and decisively contributed to and hastened the development of the open-door theology among Sabbatarian Adventists."<sup>139</sup> Such phrases are more related to the preconceived notions of a writer like Arthur L. White or Nichol than to a scholarly presentation, based on the naked facts.

It is also a questionable conclusion to state that it is "extremely difficult" to make any "clear-out" division in EGW, in reference to her interpretation of the two terms "shut-and open-door," since she was so "progressive" and evangelical, that her "mercy-limiting conception of the shut door" could not be taken at their face value.<sup>140</sup> Even so, Poehler could not deny the change in meaning as to EGW's shut-door view in 1851. So Poehler evidently tried hard to avoid the two opposing presentations and decided for a middle-in-the-way-interpretation for EGW, hoping to *unite* the factions within his church on a happy compromise.

In direct opposition to the apologists, however, Poehler could demonstrate how EGW's February 1845 vision "confirmed Turner's Bridegroom theory."<sup>141</sup> But again, Poehler went on to say that the same vision contained elements pointing "in a direction which enabled the shut-door group to gradually develop an open-door theology without having to radically break with their past." Reference is made to 1) a literal interpretation of the Bible, 2) the rejection of stubborn Millerites and others of the Midnight Cry, or the historical-salvation import of October 22, and not least 3) a continuation of the atonement of Christ, though only for the "Advent people."<sup>142</sup> It must be admitted that Poehler's "Sic et Non" reasoning as to EGW's early shut-door views seems to have been expressed out of policy. It is, indeed, difficult to write impartially on the campus of theological college with a strong "reimnant" conviction.

Thus, what is actually meant by her literal interpretation of the Bible? After all she like the rest of the prominent shut-door believers wrongly applied the parable of Mt. 25:1 — 13 to the Millerite movement, suggesting that the “door of mercy” (or the door of access to salvation) was shut on October 22, 1844, for the world and the churches. She, moreover, applied Daniel 7:13 about “the Son of man” coming with the clouds of heaven to an alleged change of ministration for Jesus from the Holy to the Most Holy Place on that same October day. When compared with Turner’s *Advent Mirror* essay, EGW’s version stands forth as less refined and more starkly sectarian and shut-door dominated.

Despite all underfounded argumentative saltomortals in Poehler, however, possibly employed in the interest of union in the SDA church, there are also many straightforward conclusions. For instance, against Dams-teegt Poehler argues that during the shut-door period EGW regarded sinners as “excluded from divine mercy.” And like the rest of the “Little Flock” EGW limited the so called “open door” of the heavenly sanctuary—or in reality the possibilities of eternal bliss—to “Israel,” or the shut-door Sabbatarians.<sup>143</sup> If conclusions of this kind had been the only ones, Poehler’s study would no doubt have become the definitive work on this topic. Suffice it here to quote a statement: “The striking similarity of EGW’s language to that of the Sabbatarian Adventists in general hardly leaves room for any other conclusion but that *she also* shared their thoughts in this matter; for language is always a reflection of thought.”<sup>144</sup>

In the same paragraph the same writer enumerates several of the shut-door notions that EGW *shared* with her Brethren.<sup>145</sup> But this is not the real intent of the talented German scholar. For the last part of his tentative study reveals how even a student with fresh eyes and the best of motives with necessity gets entangled or enmeshed in his own net of the many contrasting conclusions, when he desperately attempts to reconcile contrary elements. This view is well demonstrated in Poehler’s discussion of the 1851 deletions in EGW’s booklet, *Experience and Views*. For Poehler worked very hard to save the face of EGW in regard to Shut Door. He even feels forced to raise the question as to whether EGW actually understood the “progressive” meaning or the message in her early visions. Only so can he account for the fact that EGW in her early visions expressed the contents so vaguely that many readers took those revelations to support their faulty shut-door notion. Says Poehler: “In other words, we must seriously reckon with the possibility that there occurred a process of *progressive* understanding of revealed truth not only with regard to the SDA pioneers as a whole, *but also in reference to EGW herself*.”<sup>146</sup> By

advancing this theory Poehler and others attempt to formulate a more soft explanation in reference to the deletions of some conspicuous shut-door phrases than those conclusions advanced by some critics. Like Damsteegt Poehler argues that a progression had occurred in thinking of the Whites by 1851 and therefore the early visions no longer adequately expressed their thinking as to Shut Door.<sup>147</sup> This is true. By 1851 the abortive shut-door thinking, denying the Gospel to sinners, was simply a lie to the Whites, and this was why they *changed* the meaning in the early visions. As open-door Adventists they rejected the salvation-limiting concept in the classical shut-door theology. Deletions had to be made for that reason. Since the mercy-limiting element had been an important piece in EGW's former shut-door teaching, one well comprehends why James White was very reluctant to make a plain direct confession as to the new theology. This was especially difficult with the statements of the prophetess on account of the absolute claims held for her writings.

However, Poehler is right in his reasoning that though the Whites advanced a novel "progressive" theology by 1851, from the unscriptural shut-door notion to something pointing to the "open-door" theology, they could still cling to the validity of the Midnight Cry, or to the historical-salvation impact of the October date in their unique teaching of Christ's ministration in heaven. After one erroneous part in Shut Door was abandoned in 1851, another very questionable part still remained: the so called investigative judgment for all believers, living or dead, claimed to have commenced on October 22, 1844.<sup>148</sup> In time this remaining part from Miller's time failure was bound to cause traumatic suffering within the SDA Church; for as time goes on, even downright speculation tends to be regarded as absolute truth!

One of the most crucial conclusions Poehler overlooked or left out, however, was the irrefutable fact, that before 1851 EGW had supported Shut Door, also in its "mercy-limiting" meaning, like the rest of the shut-door brethren. His restraint in this matter may very well have been motivated by his difficult role as a writer trying to please two almost irreconcilable parties: honest scholarship and the expectations from the side of the denomination. Evidently Poehler did the best he could under those circumstances and *implied* in his study is a *revolutionary* new approach to EGW and Shut Door. Traditional apogetical tendencies were interspersed with the demands of naked logical scholarship.

But only recently some of the most influential and best trained Adventist theologians have openly rejected the whole concept of any judgment, or any change in Christ's office in 1844.<sup>149</sup>

Rolf Poehler's thorough discussion of the old shut-door problem must be regarded as the most radical new start in this field in any "semi-official" treatment. In this study the leading apologists were openly criticized so definitely that neither Nichol nor Arthur L. White can be accepted as authorities in this field any longer. Poehler first parted company with all previous writers in order to clear the way for his own "ecumenical" solution to the irritating problem. The German historian certainly knew his theme and had ransacked all available sources, including the unreleased EGW documents. Most likely no future installment in this field will be able to dig up many additional documents. Like all trained historians, Poehler was also cognizant of the demands to make for an adequate methodology.<sup>150</sup>

Poehler's charitable compromise certainly serves as a great eye-opener to every alert reader; there is no longer any doubt about it: EGW, too, shared the shut-door theology of her fellow believers right down to the bitter end of that troublesome formative period. And what else could one really expect?

Since the White Estate seems to be in favor with Poehler's conclusions,<sup>15</sup> one has some cause for being optimistic and hope that that day shall not be too far in the distance, when even the conservative EGW folks shall dare follow the only logical and convincing conclusion to let EGW be the human being she actually was, and at last give in for the overwhelming documentary evidence. This revolution now under way cannot harm EGW or the SDA church. The apostle once admonished us, "For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth."

## CHAP. V Notes

1. L.E. Froom, *Movement of Destiny*, Wash. D.C. chs. 11—22.
2. Poehler, op.cit. p. 19.
3. Ibid.
4. D.M. Canright, *Seventh-day Adventism Renounced*. New York 1889. This book saw no less than 14 printings.
5. D.M. Canright, *The Life of Mrs. Ellen G. White*. Cincinnati 1919, chs. 1—2. Cf. above ch. III.
6. Smith to Canright, Mar. 22, Apr. 6, 1883. Certified copies in the author's files.
7. Butler in *Review and Herald*, Feb. 24 1885—Jul. 19, 1885.
8. *Review and Herald Extra*, 1887 passim.
9. Smith to Canright, Apr. 6, 1883.
10. J.N. Loughborough, *The Rise and Progress of Seventh-day Adventists*. Battle Creek 1905, pp. 214—235.
11. Poehler op.cit. pp. 20—21.
12. Loughborough op.cit. pp. 221—229.
13. *SDA Encyclopedia* 1966, pp. 326, 327. D. was elected Secretary of the reorganized General Conference in 1901.

14. *Spectrum* Vol. 10:1, (May 1979) pp. 27—57.
15. Daniels in *The Review and Herald*, Nov. 25, 1926, Jan. 14, 1932.
16. Pochler op.cit. pp. 22, 23.
17. *SDA Encyclopedia* 1966, p. 303.
18. Pochler op.cit. p. 23.
19. F.D. Nichol, *Ellen G. White and Her Critics*, Wash. D.C. 1951, pp. 161—266.
20. *Ibid.*, pp. 161—201.
21. F.D. Nichol, *The Midnight Cry*, Wash. D.C. 1944.
22. Nichol 1951, p. 161.
23. *Ibid.*, pp. 161—164.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 165.
25. *Ibid.*, pp. 164—167.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 167.
27. *Ibid.*, pp. 171—176.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 176.
29. *Ibid.*, pp. 178, 179.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 181.
31. *Ibid.*, pp. 189—201.
32. *Ibid.*, ch. 14.
33. *Ibid.*, pp. 203—206.
34. *Ibid.*, pp. 211—238.
35. *Ibid.*, pp. 220—229.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 222. Italics supplied.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 222.
38. *Ibid.*, pp. 223, 225—226.
39. Cf. *To the Little Remnant Scattered Abroad*, Apr. 6, 1846. Portland, Maine. (EGW broadside).
40. Cf. Lindén 1978, p. 89.
41. Nichol 1951, p. 228.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 241.
43. *Ibid.*, pp. 242, 243.
44. *Ibid.*, p. 244.
45. *Ibid.*, p. 245.
46. *Ibid.*
47. Nichol 1951, p. 237, 238. But see James White to the Hastingses, Aug. 26, 1848. WEA. Wash. D.C.
48. Nichol 1951, pp. 236, 237.
49. *Ibid.*, p. 236.
50. LeRoy Edwin Froom, *Movement of Destiny*, Washington D.C. 1971. Cf. my book review in *Spectrum*, Aug. 1971. pp. 89—91.
51. Froom, *Prophetic Faith*, IV, 1954, pp. 832, 833.
52. Pochler op.cit. pp. 27—28.
53. *Concerning The Linden Dissertation*, A letter from Arthur L. White of the Ellen G. White Estate to Dr. Ingemar Lindén, Oct. 21, 1971. Duplicated. WEA. Wash. D.C.
54. *Ibm*, p. 1.
55. *Ibm*, p. 2.
56. *Ibm*, p. 3.
57. *Concerning the Linden Dissertation*, p. 3.
58. *Ibm*, pp. 5—10.
59. *Ibm*, p.p. 8—9.
60. Cf. *supra*, ch. III.
61. *Ellen G. White and the Shut Door Question*. Duplicated in the Ellen G. White Estate, Wash. D.C. Nov. 10, 1971, pp. 1—2.
62. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
63. *Ibid.*, p. 13.
64. *Ibid.*, p. 20.
65. *Ibid.*, p. 21.
66. Cf. Lindén 1978, p. 89.
67. *Ellen G. White and the Shut Door Question*, pp. 23—24.
68. *Ibid.*, pp. 7—9.
69. Cf. Lindén 1978, pp. 78—87.
70. *Ellen G. White and the Shut Door Question*, p. 9.
71. *Ibid.*, p. 31 b.
72. *Ellen G. White and the Shut Door Question*, p. 31 b. Cf. Lindén 1978, ch. II.
73. *Ellen G. White and the Shut Door Question*, pp. 38—40.
74. *Ibid.*, p. 33.
75. *Ibid.*, pp. 42—44.
76. EGW stated that there was a considerable "stir" in reference to the visions. Moreover she offered to write out by hand all the "particulars" in a certain vision she had experienced "at Brother Cushman's." Cf. *Ellen G. White and the Shut Door Question*, pp. 41, 42, 57, 58. See also EGW to Brother and Sister Dodge, Jul. 21, 1851. This document was "released" only after this present

- writer had referred to it in his diss. in 1971.
77. Ellen G. White and the Shut Door Question, pp. 35–40.
  78. Cf. above, ch. III.
  79. EGW to Brother and Sister Dodge, Jul. 21, 1851. WEA. Washington D.C. (Letter 4, 1851).
  80. Cf. Lindén 1978, ch. II.
  81. Cf. Poehler op.cit. and relevant articles in *Spectrum*, 1969—
  82. Damsteegt op.cit. p. 103.
  83. Cf. above, ch. III.
  84. Damsteegt op.cit. pp. 122–135.
  85. Ibid., pp. 157–163. On p. 158 D. overlooked the fact that the EGW visions supported the view that all conversions outside of the few shut-door believers, were in fact spurious or devilish activities to confuse the true “Israel” of God. Cf. *To the Little Remnant Scattered Abroad*, Apr. 6, 1846, *Present Truth*, Aug. 1849, pp. 21–22. Ibid., Mar. 1850, p. 64. Hence, if J.W. had begun to evangelize among “worldlings” and Christians in “Babylon,” he would have acted against the visions and his fundamental beliefs!
  86. Damsteegt op.cit. pp. 104–135.
  87. Ibid., ch. IV.
  88. Cf., Heb. 9:12, 24.
  89. This term stands for the last united period of Millerism after Aug. 15, 1844 up till Oct. 22, 1844.
  90. Damsteegt op.cit. pp. 155–163.
  91. Ibid.
  92. Cf. above, ch. III.
  93. Damsteegt op.cit. 149–163.
  94. Ibid., p. 151, 152, esp. note 279, p. 151.
  95. Ibid., p. 151.
  96. Above, pp.
  97. Damsteegt op.cit. pp. 121–158, passim.
  98. Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, Vol. I. Wash. D.C. 1958, pp. 60, 61. *A Word to the “Little Flock”*, Brunswick, Maine, May 30, 1847, pp. 11, 12.
  99. Damsteegt, op.cit. p. 150, note 271.
  100. Ibid., p. 158.
  101. Poehler op.cit. p. 44. Emphasis added.
  102. Ibid., pp. 46–66.
  103. Ibid., p. 47.
  104. Ibid., p. 48.
  105. Ibid., p. 49.
  106. Ibid., pp. 49–50.
  107. Ibid., p. 50.
  108. Ibid., p. 51.
  109. Ibid., p. 31.
  110. Ibid., pp. 51, 52.
  111. Ibid., pp. 52, 53.
  112. Ibid., pp. 55, 56.
  113. Cf. Richard W. Schwarz, *Light Bearers to the Remnant*. Denominational History Textbook for Seventh-day Adventist College Classes. Mountain View, Calif. 1979, pp. 70, 71.
  114. Poehler op.cit. pp. 57–59.
  115. Ibid., p. 58.
  116. Ibid., p. 58. It is, then, somewhat remarkable that P. sometimes used the same terms in distinguishing EGW from the “fanatical” shut-door believers. Cf. Poehler op.cit. pp. 106–115.
  117. Ibid., p. 58.
  118. Ibid., p. 59.
  119. Ibid., p. 61.
  120. Ibid., p. 63.
  121. Ibid., p. 71.
  122. Ibid., p. 69 (pagination is somewhat shaky in P. here!)
  123. Ibid.
  124. Ibid., p. 70.
  125. Ibid., pp. 72–83.
  126. Ibid., pp. 73, 74.
  127. Lindén 1971, pp. 71–84.
  128. Ibid., p. 71, 72. Poehler op.cit. p. 75.
  129. Poehler op.cit. p. 76.
  130. Ibid.
  131. Poehler op.cit. p. 84.
  132. Ibid., p. 87.
  133. Ibid., pp. 87, 88.
  134. Ibid., pp. 90–93.
  135. Ibid., pp. 97, 98.
  136. Ibid., pp. 102, 103.
  137. The ch. carries the propagandistic rubric, *Ellen G. White and the Doctrine of*

*the Open and Shut Door*. Poehler op. cit. p. 106.

138. Ibid., pp. 106—109.

139. Ibid., pp. 106, 107.

140. Ibid., p. 107.

141. Ibid.

142. Poehler op.cit. p. 111.

143. Ibid., p. 112.

144. Ibid., pp. 126, 127.

145. Ibid., p. 129.

146. Ibid., pp. 129, 130.

147. Ibid., pp. 153—160. Emphasis added.

148. Ibid., pp. 154, 155, 157. P. holds the view that the pioneers "were right in defending their "past experience"—even if it meant the acceptance of the

mercy—limiting shut-door view, until the sanctuary doctrine helped them to correct their mistake." Ibid., p. 157.

149. Poehler op.cit. pp. 153—160.

150. The foremost defector from the whole concept of 1844 and the so called Pre-Advent Judgment in heaven is Dr. Desmond Ford, formerly Head of the SDA theol. dept. at Avondale, College, Australia.

151. Cf. Arthur L. White, *Ellen G. White and the Shut Door Question*, Wash. D.C. Nov. 10, 1971.

152. Robert Olson to the writer, Oct. 14, 1980. In the author's files.

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# Index of Names

- Andrews, J. N. 77  
 (Sister) Arabella 49  
 Arnold, David 30, 58, 59  
 Arthur, David 17, 18  
 Baker, Dorinda 50  
 Ball, W. H. 80, 81  
 Bates, Joseph 29, 30, 32, 44, 46, 48,  
 51, 56, 60—63, 82, 90, 110, 113  
 Bradley, W. Paul 67  
 Branch, M. A. 80  
 Brinkerhoff, William H. 81, 83  
 (Mrs.) Burdick 85  
 Burton, Russell F. 93  
 Butler, George I. 86, 87, 91—92, 96,  
 112  
 Canright, D. M. 95, 96, 111, 113  
 Carver, H. S. 83  
 Case H. S. 83  
 Chapin R. R. 80  
 Cook, J. B. 22, 30, 58  
 (Bro. and Sr.) Colins 72  
 Conradi, L. R. 97  
 Cook, J. B. 22, 30, 58  
 Cranmer, Gilbert 80  
 Cromwell, Oliver 22  
 Crosier, Owen R. L. 26-32, 42, 59, 61,  
 75—77, 79, 82, 108—110, 113, 115  
 Curtis, Eli 54, 88—90, 111  
 (Bro.) Cushman 64  
 Dammon, Israel 22, 50—53, 85, 86,  
 105  
 Damsteegt, P. Gerard 61, 77, 78,  
 107—111, 113, 114, 117  
 Daniells, A. G. 96, 96, 112  
 (Bro. and Sr.) Dodge 104  
 (Sister) Durben 52, 53  
 Edson, Hiram 26, 28, 29, 30, 39, 42,  
 43, 46, 57, 61, 67, 75, 76, 79, 82, 85,  
 86, 90, 98, 101, 102, 106  
 Eva, Duncan 17  
 Finney, Charles, Grandison 100  
 Fisel, Fernand 47, 67  
 Fleming, Lorenzo 17  
 Ford, Desmond 10, 122  
 Galusha, Elon 17, 23  
 (Bro.) Gorsline 49  
 Grant, Miles 85  
 Hahn, F. B. 26, 75  
 Hall, D. P. 80  
 Hale, Apollos 15, 19—25, 52, 105  
 Harmon, Ellen Gould (White) See also  
 under White, Ellen G. 14, 18, 21,  
 26, 37, 38, 50, 52—55, 75, 83, 84, 110, 11  
 Harrison, J. F. C. 38  
 Himes, Joshua V. 15, 17, 23  
 (Brother) Hollis 70  
 Holt, George W. 30  
 Jacobs, Enoch 15, 19, 22, 25, 110, 113  
 Jones, C. H. 93  
 Jordal, Odd 68  
 Lindén, S. Ingemar 103, 104, 112, 120  
 (Bro. and Sr.) Loveland 70  
 Litch, Josiah 17  
 Long, A. C. 87—89  
 Loughborough, J. N. 39, 46, 85, 96,  
 106, 112  
 Magan Percy T. 39  
 Marsh, Joseph 23, 31  
 Mason, Perry 97  
 Matthias, Barnett 21  
 Mesmer, F. A. 23  
 Miller, William 13—19, 27, 48, 55,  
 62, 76, 90, 98, 109, 115  
 Minor, C. S. 22  
 Moody, John 50  
 Nichols, C. Richard 80  
 Nichol, F. D. 65, 81, 82, 96—102, 105,  
 112, 113, 116, 117

- Peavey, G. W. 22, 25  
 Olsen, M. E. 112  
 Poehler, Rolf 11, 12, 61—63, 80, 95,  
 97, 103, 107, 111—119  
 Pearson, C. H. 22, 23  
 Pickands, J. D. 22, 113  
 Pratt, W. 24  
 (Bro.) Ralph 70  
 Rhodes, Samuel W. 30, 57  
 Russell, C. P. 79  
 (Bro.) Rutledge 25  
 Smith, Joseph 64, 68, 104  
 Smith, Uriah 77, 80—83, 96, 112  
 Snook, B. F. 81, 83  
 Snow, Samuel S. 13—14, 16, 19—22,  
 24, 32, 49, 50, 59, 76, 105, 115  
 Spalding, Arthur L. 25, 79  
 Spicer, W. A. 95—97, 112  
 Storrs, George 13, 14, 23, 24  
 Stephenson, J. M. 80  
 (Bro.) Stowell 58  
 (Elder) Thomson, Jesse 30  
 Truisdail, Marion C. 88, 106  
 Turner, Joseph 19—22, 24, 25, 28, 29,  
 31, 32, 51—53, 59, 63, 75, 82, 84, 102,  
 105, 111, 113, 115, 116  
 Waggoner J. H. 87, 88, 112  
 Wellcome, Isaac C. 23, 84  
 White, Arthur L. 64, 79, 80, 102—107,  
 112, 113, 116, 119  
 White, Ellen G. (EGW) 21, 22, 25,  
 28—32, 37, 38—42, 46, 47—49, 52,  
 55, 56, 50—67, 76—90, 95—116  
 White, James S. 15, 22, 25, 26, 28—  
 32, 37, 42, 47, 48, 49, 52, 55, 56, 60—  
 67, 77, 79, 82, 83, 84, 88, 90, 95, 102,  
 106, 110, 111, 115, 118  
 Whiting, N. N. 17  
 Zwemer, Jack 10